

Marco Introini Luigi Spinelli

## **Architecture in Mantua From the Palazzo Ducale to the Burgo Paper Mill**

The result of a research project developed by the Mantua campus of the Politecnico di Milano, the book presents an image of the city through its architecture on the basis of a photographic survey covering all of the urbanized area. Documented by the photographs of Marco Introini and the descriptions of Luigi Spinelli, the one hundred buildings selected range from medieval works still present in the city's fabric to the Burgo paper mill, designed and built by Pier Luigi Nervi, one of Italy's most interesting examples of modern architecture.



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**POLITECNICO**  
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POLO TERRITORIALE DI  
MANTOVA



Università di Mantova  
Scienze, Lettere, e  
Cultura Contemporanea



**POLITECNICO**  
DI MILANO

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## Mantua Imago Urbis

A guide to the paintings, sculptures and works of architecture to be seen in Mantua and its surroundings was published by the local painter and architect Giovanni Cadioli in 1763 (*Descrizione delle Pitture, Sculture ed Architetture, che si osservano nella Città di Mantova, e ne'suoi Contorni*).

The author, founder of the Mantua Academy of Fine Arts and an active figure in the Habsburg policy of cultural modernization, wrote as follows in the note to readers: "A true desire to do the greatest good possible for my beloved homeland, the entreaties of dear friends and fellow citizens, and still more the authority of eminent figures have finally induced me, dear Reader, to offer you the present description of all the finest works of painting, sculpture and architecture of the city of Mantua and its surroundings, something that has never existed before to the best of our knowledge."

The literature on Mantua's art and architecture expanded in the next century with the guides written by Francesco Antoldi and Gaetano Susani, published respectively in 1816 and 1818, which gave rise to amusing outcry over their shortcomings, *Mantova numerizzata* (1839) by Vincenzo Paolo Bottoni, and finally *Delle arti e degli artefici di Mantova* (1857) by Carlo D'Arco, a source acknowledged also by the scholars of the 20th century.

Written and illustrated by Luigi Spinelli and Marco Introini of the Mantua campus of the Politecnico di Milano, the following pages bear precious witness today to the combination of scholarly research and social commitment that has given birth over the centuries to studies, descriptions and representations of Mantua's finest works of architecture, from the earliest traces to the point where history gives way to current events.

This book is a further exploration of the beauties of the past, a firm foundation for planning the future, and a work epitomizing the educational mission pursued in Mantua by the Politecnico di Milano, one of the world's leading technical and scientific universities.

### Federico Bucci

Vice-rector of the Mantua campus of the Politecnico di Milano



## Images of a City

The earliest surviving photograph of Mantua is a salt-paper print from a calotype negative dated approximately 1850 showing the house of Giulio Romano. The anonymous photographer and pioneer of this new technique, invented in France just twenty years before, captured the façade on Via Poma from the right with marked perspective foreshortening to emphasize its rhythm on a winter afternoon. The shadow covering part of the bottom storey shows by its uneven profile that the buildings opposite were unequal in height and not parallel to the subject, thus obliging the photographer to position his tripod at that point so as to obtain greater distance from his subject and attenuate the vanishing-point perspective of the façade as much as possible. Probably the work of an itinerant photographer like Luigi Sacchi, which would explain why it was taken in such critical conditions of light, the photograph shows not only what we see inside its rectangle but also the environment surrounding the building, what Paolo Monti called the fourth dimension, thus capturing the character and complexity of the urban landscape.

The first images of Mantua prior to this are two series of prints of key landmarks, one of 1829 comprising 32 views of Mantua drawn by Luigi Filippo Montini and engraved by Lanfranco Puzzi, and one of 12 prints by Marco Moro published in 1850. Both include Via Poma with the Giulio Romano house but differ markedly in approach while remaining within the confines of the urban view that was to characterize the representation of Mantua and the multiplication of its image for many years.

Montini drew Via Poma with his back to the apse of the church of San Barnaba, looking towards Via Acerbi and adopting a higher than natural viewpoint. The space is thus distorted and expanded with respect to the real perception so that the façade of the Giulio Romano house appears much longer and the street much wider, almost turning Via Poma into a piazza. The buildings are also highly stylized.

Marco Moro instead adopted the opposite viewpoint looking towards Via Chiassi, showing the façade of the Giulio Romano house on the right and extending on the left to include the apse of San Barnaba. While richer in architectural detail than Montini's, his representation is also distorted so as to make the buildings appear taller, an effect

accentuated by the inclusion of human figures out of scale, a device also featured in the Montini series and used in this case to create spatial expansion.

The inclusion of human figures — respectable citizens in these two series of engravings, in keeping with their nature as tourist guides — to accentuate the size of the buildings and perspective depth was a device subsequently used in photographic views. Many of these also featured genre scenes reflecting the social nature of the neighbourhood, thus introducing the literary approach of realism into photography. This period in the second half of the 19th century saw the opening of various photographic studios, which multiplied the views of the city's major landmarks and monuments for the production of postcards and albums for travellers stopping in Mantua. Interest attaches in this connection to a late 19th-century photograph of the Giulio Romano house in the Fratelli Alinari Archives, where the unknown photographer practically repeats the Marco Moro print, from a viewpoint at natural height, with “walk-ons” in three points to accentuate the perspective depth, care being taken not to obstruct the view of the façade, the principal subject. Nearly abandoning the genre of the view, this marked the introduction of a photographic approach later perfected in Italy by the Fratelli Alinari, whereby the building is detached from its context so as to become an architectural portrait. In the case of the Giulio Romano house, this can be seen for the first time in a photograph probably taken in the 1940s (Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale; published in the 1966 edition of Nikolaus Pevsner's *Outline of European Architecture*), followed by shots taken in 1957 by the Fratelli Alinari firm, in 1965 and probably the 1970s by the Studio Calzolari, whose archives (Mantua, Biblioteca Mediateca Gino Baratta) constitute the richest collection of photographs of Mantua's major monuments taken between 1882 and 1996, and in 1971 by Eros Vecchi.

The Giulio Romano house is an emblematic case in the history of the representation of the city's key landmarks and buildings, a crucial heritage drawn upon for the purposes of this study together with the vast and varied literature of monographs, articles, catalogues and guides on an initial architectural corpus then modified by walking through the city.

The action of strolling through the city like Baudelaire's flâneur, an approach developed by *fin de siècle* photographers, epitomized by Eugène Atget's photographic survey of Paris and subsequently taken up by urban planners, is a way not only of taking perceptual cognizance of the buildings to be documented in words and images but also of understanding their everyday urban reality. This prompted modification of the corpus of buildings originally selected to include others that are not so well documented due to their lesser degree of historical importance or historicization. It has thus been possible to represent the city in discrete terms not as a continuous flow but as made up of individual elements capable of conveying the complexity of the urban landscape. The complexity and richness of Mantua's architectural heritage, which made it necessary from the very outset not only to select but also to arrange, led to the decision to abandon perfect chronological order and begin the book with the Palazzo Ducale, the surprising result of the combination, overlapping and intersecting of different historical periods and styles that constitutes a paradigm of the city as a whole.

It was further decided to adopt the documentary approach as the most neutral and natural possible, and to organize the book in a form taking up the tradition of the earliest photographic albums of architecture, works whose fundamental importance for historical studies has been fully recognized by James Fergusson.

## Marco Introini

## Architectural Works



1.

## Palazzo Ducale: Palazzo del Capitano and the Pisanello Room

13th–14th century; 1440; 17th century  
unknown; Antonio Maria Viani;  
Antonio Pisano, known as Pisanello

Piazza Sordello, Piazza Lega Lombarda



The earliest part of the old palace or Corte Vecchia, built by the Bonacolsi family in the 13th century, corresponds to the rooms looking out at the rear onto the present-day Piazza Lega Lombarda. Luigi Gonzaga installed his three sons Guido, Feltrino and Filippino there in 1328 to rule in his name. Connected to the Magna Domus, the palace was altered and enlarged to the length of 65 metres with the addition of the front portico and the Armoury Room on the top floor. Six large double lancet windows with trefoil arches were built into the long battlemented façade together with a monumental arch with heraldic decorations in the centre.

The Staircase of the Duchesses, designed by Antonio Maria Viani in 1626–1627, leads up to the first floor, where the rise to power of the Corradi di Gonzaga family on 16 August 1328 is commemorated by *The Expulsion of the Bonacolsi* (1494), a work of the Veronese painter Domenico Morone, in the Room of Seven Steps, also known as the Morone Room after the artist. This room opens the Guastalla Apartment, named after Anna Isabella di Guastalla, wife of the last duke Ferdinando Carlo, who lived there in the late 17th and early 18th century. The six rooms have been joined since the beginning of the 20th century with the Galleria del Passerino that runs the entire length of the section overlooking Piazza Sordello. In the early 17th century, after numerous alterations for the worse, Antonio Maria Viani renovated the decorations

and the ceilings of the rooms, including the former palace chapel above the large vaulted entrance to the building. The large Armoury on the top floor, measuring 65 × 15 metres, housed the Diet of Mantua convened by Pope Pius II in 1459.

A staircase in the first room of the Guastalla Apartment leads down to the Pisanello Room, originally part of an adjacent medieval building, where restorations in the period 1969–1972 brought to light the preparatory drawings for a series of courtly frescoes painted in 1440 by Antonio Pisano, known as Pisanello, active at the court between 1422 and 1447.

Marani, Perina 1961, p. 7; L'Occaso 2009, pp. 26–30; pp. 94–98; Girondi 2013, pp. 16–45.





2.

## Palazzo Ducale: Magna Domus and Main Courtyard

13th–15th century; 1574–1581; 1771–1780  
Giovanni Battista Bertani;  
Pompeo Pedemonte; Bernardino Facciotto;  
Paolo Pozzo; Giuseppe Piermarini

Piazza Sordello 39–40, Cortile d'Onore, Giardino Pensile



The Magna Domus was built by the Bonacolsi family between the 13th and 15th centuries by joining a tower and a palace. Initially separated by a narrow lane and diverging in alignment, it came to share a portico with the Palazzo del Capitano on Piazza San Pietro in the 14th century. Traces of the small Gothic church of Santa Croce still survive in the inner courtyard. The earliest section on the first floor was converted into the Empress's Apartment for Beatrice d'Este by Paolo Pozzo in 1778. The Apartment of Guglielmo or Green Apartment in the east wing was created for the duke by Giovanni Battista Bertani (1516–1576). The Tapestry Rooms – of the Eagle, the Lion and the Emperors – were renovated by Pozzo in the Neoclassical style in 1780 to house nine tapestries of the Acts of the Apostles woven to cartoons by Raphael. The Zodiac Room in the northern section presents a wonderful ceiling painted by Lorenzo Costa the Younger. The Room of Rivers, designed in the Rococo style by Gaetano Crevola with painted decoration by Giorgio Anselmi, opens onto the Roof Garden. Designed by Pompeo Pedemonte in 1579, 14 metres above the ground on top of two levels of barrel-vaulted galleries, the garden is enclosed by porticoes with twin columns on the other three sides. The Room of Falcons and the Cabinet of Moors constitute the *studiolo* or study of Duke Guglielmo. The Corridor of Moors leads to the small Loggia of Santa Barbara (1574–1581), from which it is possible to reach the

Courtyard of Eight Faces, designed by Bernardino Facciotto. The Room of the Mirror, the ducal music chamber, is located at the rear of the Loggia of Fauns above the courtyard. The wedding banquet of Guglielmo Gonzaga was held in the Main Courtyard, originally the Courtyard of Four Plane Trees or Garden of Box Trees, in 1561. Connected to the Room of Popes and looking onto the south side of the Main Courtyard, the New Gallery, running between the Ducal Apartment and the Domus Nova, was renovated by Giuseppe Piermarini in 1771. It has housed altarpieces from suppressed religious buildings since the 19th century.

L'Occaso 2009, pp. 26–35; pp. 82–91; pp. 112–119.



3.

## Palazzo Ducale: Castle of San Giorgio

1390–1406; 1459–1474; 1531  
Bartolino Ploti; Andrea Mantegna;  
Luca Fancelli; Giulio Romano

Piazza Castello, Via San Giorgio, Lungolago Gonzaga



The castle was built between 1390 and 1406 by Bartolino Ploti from Novara for Francesco I Gonzaga on the site of the Romanesque church of Santa Maria Capo di Bove, demolished by permission of Pope Boniface IX. Square in plan with four projecting corner towers, it is surrounded by a deep moat, which was later bridged with a staircase to connect it with the palace. Dungeons were located in the cellars. Around 1459 it was transformed in a residence for Ludovico II, who moved into the castle to make way for the participants in the papal diet, by Andrea Mantegna, working as an architect. In 1472, another two sides designed by Mantegna were added to the portico in the courtyard by Luca Fancelli. A spiral ramp leads up to the Room of Coats of Arms and the adjacent Room of Suns and Room of Frescoes on the first floor. In the north tower, the famous Bridal Chamber (Camera degli Sposi or Camera Picta) was frescoed by Mantegna between 1465 and 1474 with life-sized portrayals of Ludovico III with his family and figures of the court. A round opening with a view of the sky above is painted in the middle of the ceiling. Having left Ferrara in 1490 to marry Francesco II Gonzaga, Isabella d'Este took up residence in the small domestic rooms on the east side of the first floor, including the Studiolo and the Cavern, which were used for the family collections and music. In 1531, the year of his marriage to Margherita Paleologa del Monferrato, Federico II

Gonzaga commissioned Giulio Romano to build a small house, known as the Palazzina della Paleologa, connected by means of an overhead passageway to the northeast side of the castle. This building fell into an advanced state of dilapidation and was demolished in 1898. During the period of Austrian rule, archives were installed on the first floor and cells, the last prison of the Belfiore martyrs, on the top. Restoration early in the 20th century led to demolition of the walls added to the portico and a lowering of the walkways.

Marani, Perina 1961, pp. 457–459; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 107–108; Poltronieri 1989, no. 5; Amedeo Belluzzi, "La palazzina di Margherita Paleologa nel castello di Mantova," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 384–387; L'Occaso 2009, pp. 53–65; pp. 99–104; Adorni 2012, pp. 40–45.





## Palazzo Ducale: the Ducal Apartment and Domus Nova

1480–1484; 1595–1618

Luca Fancelli; Antonio Maria Viani;  
Zenobio Bocchi

Cortile d'Onore, Piazza Paccagnini, Giardino dei Semplici



The Ducal Apartment, built for Vincenzo Gonzaga in the 17th century by Antonio Maria Viani (1550–1635), is located to the east of the New Gallery. It opens with the large Room of Archers, renovated with a ceiling supported by sturdy brackets, which holds *The Gonzaga Family Adoring the Trinity* (1605) by Rubens, the central panel of an altarpiece dismembered in 1801. Also known as the Logion Serato or closed loggia because access was forbidden by Duke Ferdinando from 1611 to 1614, the Gallery of Mirrors on the east side of the Main Courtyard is named after the Neoclassical decoration installed by Giocondo Albertolli between 1773 and 1779. The Room of the Maze has a coffered ceiling of gilded wood brought from Palazzo San Sebastiano with the inscription “*Forse che sì forse che no*” (Perhaps so, perhaps not). This is followed by the Room of the Crucible with the small chapel and the Neoclassical Room of Eros and Psyche with the adjoining chamber. Beneath these rooms, reached by a flight of steps – a miniature reproduction (1615) of the Scala Sancta or Holy Stairs in Rome – is the Apartment of the Court Dwarves.

Luca Fancelli (1430–1502) enlarged the east part of the Corte Vecchia between 1480 and 1484 with a new parallel wing in the pure Renaissance style called the Domus Nova, which crosses over the passageway towards the future Piazza Santa Barbara. The Paradise Apartment was then renovated early in the 17th century by Viani as the ducal residence

and then the seat of Austrian government. The Domus Nova looks onto the Herb Garden – or Garden of the Pavilion (1580) – defined to the east by a gallery. Redesigned in 1603 by the Franciscan Zenobio Bocchi, the garden is laid out in a pattern based on the number four, the number of the cardinal points of the compass, the seasons and the elements.

The narrow wing along the north side of the Herb Garden contains the four rooms of the Apartment of Metamorphoses or Passerino Gallery, designed by Viani in 1595 and decorated with episodes from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (completed in 1606), which contained Duke Ferdinando’s cabinet of natural curiosities.

Bellonci 1947, pp. 112–113; pp. 233–234;  
L’Occaso 2009, pp. 35–38; pp. 76–82.



5.

## Palazzo Ducale: Apartment of Isabella d'Este

1520–1524

Lorenzo Leonbruno; Battista Covo

Piazza Sordello, Cortile d'Onore



On the death of her husband Francesco II in 1519, Isabella d'Este moved from the first floor of the castle to the old palace or Corte Vecchia. Before the opening of the entrance on Piazza Sordello, where the Loggia delle Città once stood, the apartment developed with continuity on the ground floor on the Main Courtyard, with a public wing on the northwest side and a more private wing behind the southwest. Isabella personally supervised the work with the Neoplatonist intellectuals and artists of the court, who adopted mythological subjects allegorically for purposes of moral edification.

The public wing comprises a series of rooms of different sizes, including the Imperial Room, with decorations by the workshop of Giulio Romano and a fireplace with Isabella's name. The Apartment of the Cavern, with access from the portico of the Main Courtyard, opens with the Grand Chamber or Carvery, decorated throughout with grotesque frescoes by Lorenzo Leonbruno in 1523. The Studiolo or Study, with a ceiling of inlaid wood, contained a series of paintings now in the Louvre. The Cavern after which the apartment is named is entered through a marble doorway executed on the side by the Studiolo by the sculptor Tullio Lombardo in 1522–1524. The other side, originally in the castle, was finely crafted by Gian Cristoforo Romano in 1505. These two chambers house the extraordinary collections of Isabella d'Este, including precious objects, works of art, archaeological

items and natural curiosities. The present display is the result of restoration in the 1920s.

This private wing ends with a small rectangular garden, walled off from the outside. Possibly designed by Battista Covo in 1522, it is surrounded by a regular succession of Ionic columns on pedestals alternating with niches. The results of large-scale alteration with the insertion of a staircase in the 18th century were eliminated by restoration early in the 20th century.

Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 28–30 figs. 10–12; p. 33 fig. 14; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 13; p. 81; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 39 note 2; *L'Occaso* 2009, pp. 119–127.





6.

## Palazzo Ducale: Corte Nuova

1536–1539; 1572–1580

Giulio Romano; Giovanni Battista Bertani;  
Pirro Ligorio

Piazza Castello, Lungolago Gonzaga



Built beneath the south tower of the castle in 1549 to provide access to the Corte Nuova or new palace, the Staircase of Aeneas leads to the Manto Room. Initially the guardroom of the German halberdiers and then Duke Guglielmo's banqueting hall, it presents eight panels of episodes of the founding of the city. The Corte Nuova inaugurated a type of apartment with public rooms on the first floor and private chambers on the one above.

To the south, the Troy Apartment was built and frescoed by Giulio Romano between 1536 and 1539 for the marriage of Federico II and Margherita Paleologo. The sequence comprises the Room of Horses, which incorporates previously existing structures; the Room of Heads; the Cabinet of Caesars, with eleven portraits of emperors painted by Titian between 1536 and 1540 (now replaced by copies); the smaller chambers of Hawks and Birds, divided by an open loggia with a Palladian motif; and the Room of Troy, the audience chamber of Federico II, with scenes drawn from the *Iliad* alluding to the acquisition of Monferrato. The apartment ends with the Gallery of Months or Marbles, designed by Giulio as an open loggia with three arches and then elongated and enclosed in the late 16th century, possibly by Antonio Maria Viani, to house the collection of ancient marbles. The apartment looks onto Lago Inferiore, the lower lake, from the Loggia of Eleonora, built for Vincenzo I in the late 16th – early 17th century.

Duke Guglielmo decided to celebrate the dynasty with the creation of a new wing to the northeast on the Bastion Rampart and around the Garden of Dogs, built by Giulio Romano in 1526. The Grand Apartment was designed and decorated between 1572 and 1580 by Giovanni Battista Bertani, until his death in 1576, and then by the Neapolitan Pirro Ligorio. It comprises the Room of Captains, corresponding to old San Niccolò ravelin; the Room of Marquises, celebrated in 1579 with the *Fasti* series of glorious episodes in the family's history by Jacopo Tintoretto; the Room of Virtues and the Study behind the Tasso Loggia; and the Room of Dukes.

Bellonci 1947, pp. 301–302; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 108–120; Poltronieri 1989, no. 9; Pier Nicola Pagliara, "L'appartamento di Troia," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 388–391; L'Occaso 2009, pp. 65–74; pp. 104–110; Adorni 2012, pp. 40–45.



7.

## Palazzo Ducale: Corte Rustica and Mostra Courtyard

1538–1539; 1560; 1570–1610  
Giulio Romano; Giovanni Battista Bertani;  
Giuseppe Dattari

Piazza Giovanni Paccagnini,  
Lungolago Gonzaga, Cortile della Cavallerizza



Built for Federico II Gonzaga in 1538–1539 by Giulio Romano, the Corte Rustica or rustic palace presents a lower storey with a portico of arches in the rustic style and vaults and an upper with an ashlar facing cadenced by spiral semi-columns supporting a Doric entablature with triglyphs. Enlarged and decorated after Giulio's death by Giovanni Battista Bertani around 1570, the Summer or Rustic Apartment comprises the Room of Jupiter's Loves, with paintings by Lorenzo Costa the Younger, the Chamber of Orpheus, the Room of Neptune, with painted ceilings on aquatic themes by Costa, the Mostra or Display Room, with Palladian motif and balcony, and the Room of Four Columns, three chambers joined together in the 18th century with a fireplace by Giulio Romano.

The Mostra Gallery, designed by Bertani for Guglielmo Gonzaga around 1570, was completed in the 1590s by the architect Giuseppe Dattari from Cremona. The decorations were completed in 1610, when the gallery was the largest display space in the palace with canvases by the leading Italian artists and a collection of 64 marble busts. A door in the middle of the gallery leads to the octagonal Zoiolera or Treasure Chamber. The Corte Rustica looks north onto the large Mostra Courtyard. Around 1560 the mannerist experiment of the originally isolated building was extended by Bertani to the other three sides of the courtyard, conceived as an open-air interior for tournaments and parades. The

corridor of the Mostra Gallery was built on the long west side. To the north the Gallery of Months was walled in and extended to include the whole of the short side. On the long east side a narrow two-storey loggia looks onto the lower lake.

The daring but short-lived vault of perforated wood designed in 1701 by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena was destroyed before 1763, when Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga-Nevers had a riding school installed and the courtyard was renamed the Cortile della Cavallerizza.

Gombrich 1984, pp. 23–79; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 120–123; Poltronieri 1989, no. 10; Pier Nicola Pagliara, "La Rustica," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 418–423; L'Occaso 2009, pp. 75–76; pp. 110–112; Adorni 2012, pp. 46–55.





8.

**Palazzo Ducale:  
the Court Theatre,  
now a state archaeological  
museum**

1549; 1595–1596; 1706–1733; 1783; 1896  
Giovanni Battista Bertani; Antonio Maria Viani;  
Ferdinando Galli Bibiena; Andrea Galluzzi;  
Giuseppe Piermarini

Piazza Sordello 27, Via San Giorgio, Portico Gabriele  
D'Annunzio 29–30, Piazza Castello 3–7



The Court Theatre adjoining the Palazzo Ducale, designed for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga by Giovanni Battista Bertani in 1549, was destroyed by arson in 1588 and rebuilt four years later. A new theatre designed by Antonio Maria Viani was inaugurated with a performance of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'Arianna* in 1596. To the right of the building on Piazza Sordello, a portal designed by Viani in the 1608 leads through a wide passageway to the Prato di Castello, laid out in 1549 by Bertani with porticoed sides for a visit by Philip II of Spain. The exedra towards the castle was built around 1595. No longer used for riding, the vast space was occupied by workshops in the 18th century and housed the city's international trade fair for one month a year as from 1779.

During the period of Austrian rule, the Nuovo Teatro Archiducaale was commenced by Ferdinando Galli Bibiena in 1706 and completed by Andrea Galluzzi in 1733. Antonio Galli Bibiena drew up plans for its conversion into a ballroom in 1747. After a fire, it was rebuilt in 1783 once again as the Teatro Regio by the architect Giuseppe Piermarini in conjunction with a phase of reorganization of the city's theatres, including the diurnal amphitheatre of Piazza Virgiliana (1820–1821) and the new Teatro Sociale (1818–1822). The latter was a feared competitor of the Teatro Regio, which no longer enjoyed great popularity with the public and fell into disuse. Sold to the municipality

by the state in 1896, it underwent radical transformation to serve as a silkworm market and later as a fruit and vegetable market. In the end it was donated to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and renovated to house a national archaeological museum. While the architectural character of the historical shell, covered with a trussed roof on two rows of pillars, has been preserved, three floors have been inserted into the space to increase the surface area.

L'Occaso 2009, pp. 50–52; Girondi 2013, pp. 28–29.



## Palazzo Ducale: the Palace Church of Santa Barbara

1562–1572; 1581; 1779

Giovanni Battista Bertani;  
Bernardino Facciotto; Paolo Pozzo

Piazza Santa Barbara 2



Regarding the church of Santa Croce in the Corte Vecchia as small and antiquated, the 23-year-old Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga ordered the construction of a new one for the court's religious services. After the building and demolition of an edifice in 1561, the foundations were laid early in 1563 for a new basilica designed by Giovanni Battista Bertani and consecrated in October the following year by the cardinal Federico Gonzaga. Designed by Bertani in 1565–1566, the bell tower in four vertical sections was separate from the church and constituted the visual linchpin of the palace complex as a whole. The period 1569–1572 saw enlargement of the basilica with the addition of a second skylight and rebuilding of the presbytery. The façade is preceded by a three-part narthex crowned with a pediment, a mannerist backdrop to the polygonal Piazza. Bernardino Facciotto unified the whole in 1581 by connecting the church and bell tower in a new façade. The triangular block of workshops, over which the first stretch of the Santa Barbara Corridor runs, was built opposite by Paolo Pozzo (1741–1803) in 1779.

The interior, which departs from the traditional liturgical layout and appears closer to a music chamber, has an elongated Greek-cross plan and two large lantern towers with three large arched windows on each side. The Gonzaga family pews look onto a raised presbytery at the top of a broad, semicircular flight of steps with a free-standing altar for frontal

celebration of Mass and an altarpiece of the *Martyrdom of St Barbara* by Domenico Ricci, known as Brusasorci. The Antegnati organ has panels painted by Fermo Ghisoni. The crypt, where Guglielmo was to be buried, is architecturally independent of the basilica above. Imperial and royal under Austrian rule and royal under the House of Savoy, the basilica lost its independent status with the Concordat in 1929. Now closed to the public, it was restored after the earthquake of 2012.

Bellonci 1947, p. 6; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 119; Roberto Brunelli, "La Basilica Palatina di Santa Barbara," in Golinelli Berto 2004, pp. 5–20; L'Occaso 2009, pp. 50–52.



## Rotonda di San Lorenzo

1081–1083

unknown

Piazza delle Erbe, Piazza Concordia



Work on this building, a chapel dedicated to St Lawrence characterized by early Christian culture and elements, began in 1081, precisely when Matilda of Tuscany was involved in a dispute with the Holy Roman Emperor and determined to assert her own and her family's position. According to scholars, it formed part of a larger palatial complex built by her father Boniface III on a square plan around a large courtyard identifiable as the Palazzo della Ragione. Circular in plan with a semicircular apse on the east-west axis, the cylindrical edifice of brick is cadenced on the outside by twenty-two semicircular engaged columns with cushion capitals and inside by ten columns, eight of brick and two of marble by the apse. In cross-section, the three superimposed levels of the body of the chapel, the women's gallery and the dome are spatially interconnected. Two narrow staircases inside the wall to the left and right of the entrance lead to the upper level of the gallery, whose vaulted ceiling bears traces of late 11th-century frescoes by a master of the Roman school.

In 1460, as a diversionary tactic connected with the building of Sant'Andrea, Ludovico Gonzaga requested papal approval for its demolition and commissioned Leon Battista Alberti to draw up plans. The Rotonda survived as a chapel until its religious functions ceased under Guglielmo Gonzaga.

Swallowed up and hidden by other structures, it was used as a warehouse and then, without

its roof, as the internal courtyard of a building in the ghetto. Brought to light in 1906 and restored as from 1908, with the Rotonda di San Tomè in San Almenno Bartolomeo as a model for the upper section, it was reopened in 1911 and reconsecrated in 1926. The restoration of the Palazzo della Ragione by Aldo Andreani in May 1943 separated the Rotonda from the house that connected it to the building.

"Importante scoperta romana a Mantova," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 21 March 1908, p. 3; C. Battaglia, *La rotonda di San Lorenzo in Mantova*, Mantova 1955; Gianfranco Ferlisi, "La Rotonda di San Lorenzo. Piazza delle Erbe," in Golinelli Berto 2004, pp. 41–70.





## Complex of municipal buildings

1198–1227; 1462–1473; 1250  
unknown; intervention by Giovanni da Arezzo;  
Luca Fancelli; Dorcilio Moscatelli;  
Carlo and Aldo Andreani

Piazza Broletto, Via Broletto, Piazza delle Erbe,  
Via Giustiziati

The administrative centre during the commune was the Palazzo del Podestà or Broletto, built in 1198 by the *podestà* (governor) Laudarengo Martinengo da Brescia. With the Torre Civica (1227) or municipal tower at the west end, the building divides Piazza Broletto, the hub of public life, where a seated statue of Virgil looks down from the wall, from Piazza delle Erbe, the marketplace. The construction of the Arengario connected Piazza Broletto with the Palazzo della Masseria, today a restaurant, where frescoes by the school of Pisanello can be seen, including a view of Mantua in 1433. The Palazzo del Podestà has undergone repeated alteration and rebuilding, including work by Giovanni da Arezzo in 1462 and the blind crenellation at the top built for Ludovico III Gonzaga by the Florentine architect Luca Fancelli (1473). Used also in recent times as a prison, it housed a museum devoted to Tazio Nuvolari and Learco Guerra from 1994 to 2009.

Erected on the east side of Piazza delle Erbe in 1250 on the remains of a hostel for pilgrims, the Palazzo della Ragione was later joined to the Palazzo del Podestà. The 15th century saw the addition of the portico on the Piazza and the Torre dell'Orologio (1472–1473) or clock tower by Luca Fancelli to house the law courts and notarial archives.

The architect Dorcilio Moscatelli arbitrarily renovated the building around 1726, altering the windows on the façade. Surveys of the complex were carried out between 1913 and 1922 by the architect Aldo Andreani

— initially with his father Carlo, an engineer, who fell to his death there on 20 March 1915 — with a view to restoration, which was undertaken from 1939 to 1944. The "surgical operations" performed despite the opposition of the historian Ercolano Marani comprised demolition of the tower joining the two buildings, restoration of the mullioned windows on the façade and clearance of the main hall of the Palazzo della Ragione. Further restoration based on opposite criteria and directed by the engineer Giuseppe Volpi Ghirardini took place between 1969 to 1971. The two palaces are now undergoing consolidation and repurposing after the earthquake of 29 May 2012.

Aldo Andreani, *Palatium Vetus et Palatium Novum Communis Mantuae*, Ostiglia 1915; *Rassegna* 1988, pp. 58–76; figs. 1–13, 16–17, 27–34; p. 30 note 5; p. 80; p. 85; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 16; fig. 12 p. 24; p. 59 note 2; pp. 63–65; figs. 20–21 p. 79; pp. 120–121; figs. 15–23 pp. 129–130; p. 172; pp. 178–180; fig. 5 p. 181; p. 195; pp. 212–213; Giulia Marocchi, *Aldo Andreani & Mantova. Un disegno per i palazzi Comunali*, Il Rio Arte, Mantova 2014; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 9; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Rilievo e progetto di restauro dei Palazzi Comunali di Mantova e Progetto di restauro dei Palazzi Comunali e restauro di Palazzo della Ragione," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 116–117 and 212–221; pp. 12–13; p. 32.



## Friary of Sant'Agnese, now the Diocesan Museum

1248; 1775

unknown; Paolo Pozzo

Piazza Virgiliana 55



In 1248, led by Blessed Giovanni Bono, the Augustinians founded a friary on the inlet of the Middle Lake – where the Piazza Virgiliana was created at the end of the 18th century – with the church of Sant'Agnese. The founder of the order died in the friary the following year. The church, richly adorned with works of art, is where Luigia Gonzaga, the mother of Baldassarre Castiglione, was buried in 1542. The east wing of the large rectangular cloister on two levels, with a portico on each side and mullioned windows on the upper storey, comprises a chapel resting on stone columns and an extension to the northeast with rib vaulting.

The friary was suppressed in 1775, the year in which Paolo Pozzo submitted various plans for the new Neoclassical façade of the orphanage on the west side, looking onto Piazza Virgiliana, which were repeatedly rejected by Count von Kaunitz in Vienna as overly decorative deductions for such a building. The simplified work carried out by Pozzo on this wing, originally to the rear of the friary, and on the monumental stone staircase in the northwest corner reversed the relationship of the complex with the city. The decision taken in 1783 to use the friary as a barracks and storage space for hay marked the beginning of gradual deterioration. At the beginning of the 19th century the church was the property of Giacomo Malacarne, who had it demolished in 1806. Some remains of the entrance portico survive in the Casa Zanardi on Via Cavour.

The diocesan authorities restored the complex in the mid-20th century and put it to educational uses, including a student hall named after Blessed Contardo Ferrini. Since 1983 it has housed the diocesan museum named after Francesco Gonzaga, the Franciscan bishop of Mantua from 1593 to 1620. The items on display include tondos with preparatory drawings by Mantegna and Correggio, canvases by Bazzani, articles of jewellery donated by the Gonzaga family and the Missaglia collection of armour, previously in the Sanctuary of the Beata Vergine delle Grazie in the southeast corner.

Carpeggiani 1999, p. 120 figs.; p. 124; Jacometti 1999, pp. 183–184; Bonora 1999, p. 220; Roberta Benedusi, "La chiesa e il convento di Sant'Agnese," in Golinelli Berto 2009, pp. 7–39.





## Church and Convent of Santa Maria del Gradaro

1256–1295

unknown

Via Gradaro, Viale Salvator Allende

The original name of the church, built in 1256 on an early Christian site, is Santa Maria Annunziata di Gradaro in Campo Santo. The word *gradaro* comes from the Latin *cretarium* meaning mound of clay. The construction of the convent around a rectangular cloister for nuns of the order of Saint Mark began in 1268 and was completed in 1295, the date of the church's portal. Two buildings were added in the 14th century but a fall in vocations led to a decline that prompted Barbara of Brandenburg, wife of Ludovico III Gonzaga, in 1454 to assign the complex to the Benedictines of Monte Oliveto, a community including both monks and nuns.

The body of the church is divided by a wall into two separate parts for the religious and lay congregations. The three aisles are divided into six bays of ogee arches and the semicircular apse is a 16th-century addition.

After the annexation of Mantua to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Maria Theresa suppressed the Benedictines of Monte Oliveto by decree on 20 March 1769 and the complex was assigned to the city council in January 1775. Initial plans for a military hospital were discarded due to the proximity to the lagoon of Lago Inferiore, the lower lake, and it was converted into a depot and barracks for the Imperial artillery. The church became a powder magazine with the construction of a wooden mezzanine and the convent housed the barracks. Storage facilities for guns and materials were planned in the open space in front.

The church was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the local authorities in 1952 and restoration commenced in 1958. Restoration of the cloister, directed by the engineer Giuseppe Volpi Ghirardini, began in 1964. In 1966 the complex became a nursery school and a home and training centre for girls owned and run by the Oblate Sisters of the Poor of the Immaculate Virgin.

Marani, Perina 1961, pp.24–25; Bonora 1999, p. 218 fig.; p. 220 note 16; Roberta Piccinelli, Claudia Bonora Previdi, Stefano Siliberti, *Santa Maria del Gradaro tra storia e arte*, Editoriale Sometti, Mantova 2004.





## Palazzo Bonacolsi Castiglioni

1280

unknown

Piazza Sordello 10–12, Vicolo Bonacolsi

One of the city's oldest palaces, this was originally called Palazzo Bonacolsi after the family that ruled over Mantua until the beginning of the 14th century. Ludovico Gonzaga ousted the family in 1328 and kept the mummified body of the slain Rinaldo Bonacolsi, known as Passerino, on display, seated on a hippopotamus, in Palazzo Ducale. Suzanne Henriette of Lorraine, wife of the last Gonzaga duke, appears to have got rid of the body by having it thrown into the lake, thus bringing about the dynasty's downfall in accordance with a prophecy. Covering an area of 4,000 square metres together with secondary buildings and a low tower on vicolo Bonacolsi, the palace became the private residence of the noble Castiglione family of Lombardy, whose members include popes, cardinals, senators and soldiers as well as the renowned humanist and intellectual Baldassarre Castiglione (1478–1529), diplomat to the courts of Urbino, Milan and Mantua (under Francesco II Gonzaga) and author of *The Book of the Courtier*, a courtesy book in dialogue form published in Venice in 1528, as well as apostolic nuncio and ambassador of popes Leo X and Clement VII to the court of Charles V of Spain. He is buried in the sanctuary of Santa Maria delle Grazie in a tomb designed by Giulio Romano. The three storeys of the medieval façade with Ghibelline battlements dominating the west side of Piazza Sordello present tall rectangular windows on the ground floor (seven) and the

first (nine), and seven large windows on the second, each with two marble mullions, arched cornice and alternating quoins of stone and brick. There are entrances on the left, with a Gothic arch resting on small columns, and in the centre with a balcony above. There is also another balcony on the right corner. The building is now a deluxe bed & breakfast. A 14th-century fresco of the *Tree of Life* covers eight metres of a wall in a room on the top floor of the tower.



## Complex of Palazzo Acerbi

1281; 1480

unknown

Piazza Sordello 1–7A, Via Cavour 96–106

The building with adjoining tower on the first ring of city walls was occupied by the Acerbi family in the 13th century. Ludovico I Gonzaga moved there on ousting the Bonacolsi in 1328, leaving the Palazzo del Capitano to his three sons.

The complex consists of Palazzo Guerrieri (later Cadenazzi Risi) and the tower. The two-storey Palazzo Guerrieri was built in 1480 and bestowed by Francesco II on 10 January 1526, together with the tower, on the Guerrieri Gonzaga family, who had the entrance moved to the present-day Via Cavour.

The medieval tower of 55 metres in height was sold by the Acerbi family to Pinamonte Bonacolsi on 10 April 1281. The adjoining Bonacolsi Chapel is decorated with paintings in the style of Giotto. The tower is called the Torre della Gabbia after the iron cage (*gabbia* in Italian) of 1 × 2 × 1 metres made in 1576 and hung halfway up its wall by order of Guglielmo Gonzaga. It was in this open-air cell that the cutpurse Marchino Ziganti spent no fewer than three months exposed to the elements and the eyes of the populace. It was joined to the building below in the 16th century, renovated with the addition of marble pilasters on the south façade and decorated with paintings by the school of Mantegna. The complex became the property of senator Giuseppe Cadenazzi in 1850 and was converted into a condominium. The tower was donated to the city for the necessary restoration work.

It was in a room there owned by the lawyer Giovanni Battista Risi that naval lieutenant Ugo Romei founded the Radio Club Mantovano at the very end of 1924. The newspaper *La radiotelefonìa* reported on the meetings of experts and enthusiasts held on the premises, described as one of the best and best-equipped receiving stations. The earthquake of 20 May 2012 caused damage and the collapse of pieces of the tower, which was evacuated and closed. It has been undergoing structural consolidation since 2017 and restoration of the internal layout to create a panoramic vantage point.

Enzo Boriani, *Castelli e torri del mantovano*, Apollonio, Brescia 1969.



## Friary of San Francesco

1304; 1944; 1952

unknown; interventions by Aldo Andreani and Francesco Banterle

Piazza San Francesco d'Assisi 5,  
Via Angelo Scarsellini 2



The earliest dating of the friary of San Francesco is 1304. Its Gonzaga Chapel served from 1369 to 1484 as the mausoleum of Mantua's reigning dynasty, the burial place of Guido Gonzaga, Ludovico II Gonzaga and his wife Alda d'Este, Francesco I Gonzaga and his second wife Margherita Malatesta, Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga and Rodolfo Gonzaga. The body of Giovanni dalle Bande Nere was buried in the church in full armour in 1526 but moved to the Medici Chapel in Florence in 1685. The church was deconsecrated by the Austrians in 1782 and the complex was fortified between 1805 and 1852 and converted into an artillery supply depot inside the city.

Appointed by the city council to carry out restorations in 1941, Aldo Andreani surveyed the deeper layers of building back to the 14th and 15th centuries before proceeding in June 1942 to demolish all the military structures and fill in the moat. The forecourt and bell tower were furnished respectively with a new portico and a new upper section, while the interior of the church was cleared of later additions. In the meantime, the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor was granted use of the complex in September 1943. Work was halted by the war on 25 August 1944, when relations between the architect and the Fascist mayor were already deteriorating, and the complex was severely damaged on 3 April 1945 by bombing, which spared only the façade of the

church and some of the side chapels.

The work of rebuilding to incorporate the surviving parts was carried out in 1952 by the Veronese architect Francesco Banterle (1886–1972), who reconstructed the façade with three spires, the bell tower and the Gonzaga Chapel in the Romanesque and Gothic styles of the church. Some original frescoes can currently be seen in the church, including *St Francis Receiving the Stigmata* by Stefano da Verona and 14th-century scenes of the life of St Louis of Toulouse.

*Rassegna* 1988, pp. 77–79, figs. 35–44; figs. 18–26 pp. 68–72; p. 85; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, pp. 121–122; pp. 131–132 figs. 24–28; p. 214; Bonora 1999, p. 233; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 21; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Restauro del complesso di San Francesco," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 222–224; p. 32.





## Rocchetta di Sparafucile

1372; 1808

Giovanni da Padova; François-Philippe de Foissac-Latour

Via Legnago, Strada Forte

The building now known as the Rocchetta di Sparafucile was erected around 1372, when Ludovico Gonzaga had the old village of San Giorgio walled to defend the bridge of the same name, completed in 1404. The conquest of Mantua by Habsburg Imperial forces in 1630, the battle of San Giorgio in 1796 and the dominion of the French, who reinforced the citadel with lunettes, ravelins and a covertway to withstand the Austrian siege in 1799 are all events that connect the building with the bridge in its strategic role of access to the city. In 1808 the French decided to raze the entire village of over seventy houses, a church and a monastery to the ground and build the Lunette of San Giorgio, incorporating the Rocchetta as a watchtower. The fortification was part of a broader Habsburg defence system from 1814 to 1866. When Mantua was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, the Lunette became a customs and excise post and ceased all military functions in 1914.

The municipal authorities began demolishing all the defence works after World War I and the Rocchetta is now the only surviving part of the Lunette. In the meantime, the ruined building had become associated with the tavern of Sparafucile, a character in the third act of Verdi's opera *Rigoletto*.

Restoration began in 1970 after a long period of abandonment, bringing to light the original cobblestone paving with parallel lines of granite slabs for cart and carriage wheels. The removal of plaster revealed the different

layers and the tower was built up on the four corners above its original height (marked by a stretcher course of bricks) to support a new protective roof. The Rocchetta served as a municipal youth hostel from 1975 to 1994, after which it fell into disuse and was restored in 2010. Used today as a park for campervans and caravans, the area has the disadvantage of proximity to the busy traffic on the road to the city across the San Giorgio bridge.

*Il Borgo di San Giorgio di Mantova. Duemila anni di storia*, Editoriale Sometti, Mantova 2001.



## Cathedral of San Pietro

14th century; 1545; 1756–1761

Jacobello and Pietropaolo dalle Masegne;  
Luca Fancelli (attrib.); Giulio Romano;  
Nicolò Baschiera (façade)

Piazza Sordello



The surviving elements of the medieval cathedral are the 12th-century bell tower and the Gothic chapels on the right side with their alternation of terracotta spires and cusps by Jacobello and Pietropaolo dalle Masegne, who also built the façade. The Incoronata Chapel, attributed to Luca Fancelli, was added in the 15th century by Francesco I Gonzaga. In 1545, after a fire, Giulio Romano set about redesigning the cathedral for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, who favoured a return to the origins in opposition to Pope Paul III. The tombs were removed and the Constantinian basilica of Saint Peter's in Rome was adopted as a model. The work on the interior left the late-medieval side and façade untouched. With the assistance of Battista Covo, Giulio displayed his building skills by bolstering the walls through replacement of the ancient columns with a larger number of fluted Corinthian columns of Verona marble, in a ratio of 2:3, supporting an entablature with architrave. The space of the deep Gothic chapels was used to add two new through aisles on either side of the original three. The lighting of the central aisle creates an evocative interplay of shadow and perspective between the six rows of columns. The architect's death in 1546 left the question of a double ambulatory around the presbytery still open. The cardinal decided to add nothing more to the work, which Giovanni Battista Bertani subsequently took over to build the apse, transept and (modified) presbytery.

A competition was held by Bishop Antonio Guidi di Bagno in 1755 and the new façade was built entirely of marble in 1756–61 by the winner, Nicolò Baschiera, a Roman officer of the Imperial engineering corps stationed in Mantua. It presents a single order of engaged Corinthian columns and a broken triangular pediment crowned with statues and coats of arms. The architectural device of a lower wing on either side has been criticized over the years.

D'Arco 1838, pp. 66–67; Poltronieri 1989, no. 14; Marani, Perina 1961, pp. 212–214; Marani, Perina 1965, p. 227; note 131 p. 245; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 146–153; Manfredo Tafuri, "Il Duomo di Mantova, 1545 sgg.," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 550–557; Adorni 2012, pp. 142–151.





Archaeological site  
of San Nicolò

1423; 19th–20th century  
unknown

Vicolo Maestro



The church of San Nicolò in the suburban cemetery of Gradaro was granted to friars of the Ambrosian order by Gianfrancesco Gonzaga in 1423. The nearby district of Cappadocia was the scene of the martyrdom around 35 AD of numerous Christians, including the Roman centurion Longinus, who is said by legend to have brought the relic of Christ's blood to Mantua. Part of the area was granted by Francesco Gonzaga in 1442 as a cemetery for the Jewish community. Expanded at the beginning of the 16th century by Isacco and Moisè Norsa, it contains the graves of two famous cabalists, Menahem Azariah da Fano (1548–1620) and Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto (1625–1697). Moved to San Giorgio around 1780 in compliance with the regulations on public hygiene, it remained the property of the Jewish community until 1852, when the land was taken over by the military on the undertaking that the gravestones would be respected and visits would be allowed. Two massive powder magazines were built of brick during the period of Austrian rule, one of which still stands in the area, which was taken over during World War I by the 4th Antiaircraft Regiment, stationed in the monastery of Gradaro. After the introduction of the Fascist racial laws, the area was occupied by transit camp number 132, which became the Stalag 337 camp for Allied prisoners of war with the arrival in November 1943 of the 1st SS Panzer Division

(Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler) and then the Dulag 339 transit camp in May 1944. Supporters of the Italian Social Republic were detained there when the Fascist regime finally fell. In the area generically called 'Deposito Misto,' the 1950s saw the construction of the five existing warehouse sheds, two of which in a very poor state of preservation, along the rampart on the lower lake (Lago Inferiore). Feasibility studies have recently been carried out for utilization of this currently disused area of major historical importance still owned by the military.





## Ospedale Grande di San Leonardo

1450–1472; 1787

Antonio di Manetto Ciaccheri;  
interventions by Paolo Pozzo  
and Paolo Pianzola

Piazza Virgiliana 25–26–27,  
Via Giovanni Zambelli 12–12A

Authorized by Pope Nicholas V on 8 March 1449 at the request of Ludovico II Gonzaga, the building of the city's first modern hospital commenced in 1450. The central chapel was completed in 1472 and the complex began to accommodate the city's poor and destitute in March the same year, taking over from the numerous charitable institutions and hospices already operating in Mantua.

The rigorous cross-shaped, square layout with two-storey buildings at right angles around four inner courtyards and the proportional modulation of the component parts derive explicitly from Tuscan models. Elements of Florentine architecture recalling the contemporary Brunelleschi cloister of Santa Croce are also to be found in the capital-shaped brackets and the inner façades of three of the four courtyards, with continuous arched porticos and upper loggias with architraves supporting the roof. Paolo Carpeggiani suggests that the design should be attributed to Antonio di Manetto Ciaccheri, who worked with Brunelleschi and was in the service of the Gonzaga family from the end of 1448 to halfway through 1452. The subsequent wars and state of crisis in the duchy saw deterioration of the structure, whose role as a civilian hospital was expanded during the period of Austrian rule to include military functions connected with the repurposing of the former Capuchin friary and convent. Plans were drawn up by Paolo Pozzo in 1787 for renovation of the old hospital and

elongation of the wings but never carried out. Its conversion into a penitentiary in 1798, with the relocation of the civilian hospital in the former friary of Sant'Orsola, led to rebuilding of the sides looking onto the Ancona di Sant'Agnese, where Pozzo was creating a park in the same period, and onto Via Zambelli by the engineer Paolo Pianzola between 1821 and 1829.

The complex became a barracks in 1862 and underwent numerous alterations. A residential building now stands on the site of the vanished west courtyard and part of the complex is occupied by the headquarters of the city's traffic police.

Marani, Perina 1961, pp. 68–70; Carpeggiani 1994, pp. 31–33; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 149 note 27; Jacometti 1999, pp. 184–185; Marina Molon, "Quartiere San Leonardo e Piazza Virgiliana," in Bersani, Bogoni 2007, p. 89.



21.

## House of the Merchant Giovanni Boniforte

1455

unknown

Piazza delle Erbe 26, Piazza Andrea Mantegna 7



Surviving documents and the inscriptions on the beams of the portico give the date of 24 December 1455 for the purchase of the small and originally Gothic house by Giovanni Boniforte da Concorezzo, the 25-year-old first-born son of the wool merchant Bertone, who had rented a shop on its west side from the Gonzaga family since 1428. Regular in shape (6.9 × 5.1 metres), the four-storey building housed the shop on the ground floor, storerooms on the first and one room each on the second and third. The cellars included an old well and a masonry passageway beneath the paving of the portico. Adjoining it were the Torre del Salaro — a tower built between 1300 and 1322, originally owned by the Poltroni family, reduced in height and used as a salt warehouse during the period of the commune — and the building erected after 1830 on Piazza Mantegna. The original medieval appearance survives in the two tall ornamental friezes of terracotta that divide the façade horizontally and the decorative blind arcade known as a Lombard band. The trabeated portico with four marble columns and capitals carved with various decorations denote the influence of 15th-century Veneto architecture, as does the alternation of Verona marble and terracotta in the decorations. The double-arched windows, three on each the first and second floors, have large rectangular frames decorated with different motifs that recall the Orient in a unique design of Hispanic inspiration. This

variety of influences may be related to the owner's contacts with Venice, from which he imported merchandise. Boniforte, who had symbols of his commerce carved into the marble of the façade, is also known for his contemptuous treatment of Luca Fancelli, the architect appointed by Ludovico Gonzaga to plan the surrounding area. Boniforte's daughter Elisabetta inherited the house on his death in 1478 and it has changed hands repeatedly since 1550 while always retaining its function as a shop and surviving probable attempts at despoilment. Declared a protected building in 1931 and restored in 2001, it has housed the Casa del Bianco Norsa shop and storerooms since 1867.

Marani, Perina 1961, p. 18; pp. 27–28; Carpeggiani, 1994, pp. 37–39; Mariarosa Palvarini Gobio Casali, *La casa di Giovan Boniforte da Concorezzo. Una preziosa architettura del Quattrocento mantovano*, Mantova 2015.



## Temple of San Sebastiano

1460–1500

Leon Battista Alberti; Pellegrino Ardizzoni

Largo XXIV Maggio 4, Via Santissimi Martiri



The construction of this edifice, probably as a Gonzaga family mausoleum or as a votive church for deliverance from the plague, began in 1460 to plans by Leon Battista Alberti, who decided in 1470, before the portico was completed, to reduce the number of pilasters on the façade from six to four. The compact square façade designed by Alberti displays evolution with respect to the principles laid down in his *De re aedificatoria*. Instead of columns, four slender pilasters project slightly from the solid masonry of the narrower central bay and support a tall entablature that is interrupted in the middle and joined by an unprecedented Syriac arch. Preceded by a pronaos, the centralized plan is based on a Greek cross, the arms of which end in apses, set in a square. The crypt beneath, which is separate from the church, has the same perimeter but is characterized by the presence of regular grid of closely-spaced supporting pillars.

After the deaths of Alberti in 1472 and Ludovico II in 1478, work on the project was abandoned apart from the two segments of the entablature installed by Luca Fancelli in May 1479. Assigned in 1488 to the canons regular, the edifice and friary were completed by the architect Pellegrino Ardizzoni, appointed in 1499, who is responsible for the arches on the lower level, the loggia and staircase on the left, and the central doorway set in a rectangular frame.

The church was deconsecrated in 1848

and used by the military to store hay. The invasive restoration by Andrea Schiavi in 1925 obstructed the two outer arches on the façade with staircases leading directly to the level of the church and opened the three blind arches in the centre, thus altering the system of the access to exclude the loggia on the left. The temple became a monument to the fallen in the 1930s and the friary, then used to house a garrison, is now in a state of abandonment.

Wittkower 1964, pp. 49–55; Carpeggiani 1994, pp. 45–48.





## Church of Sant'Andrea

1470; 1732

Leon Battista Alberti; Luca Fancelli;  
Filippo Juvarra (dome)

Piazza Andrea Mantegna 4–6,  
Piazza Leon Battista Alberti 2–5



The origins of the church of Sant'Andrea date back to the 9th century and the discovery of a relic of Christ's blood in 804. A second discovery, made in 1048, resulted in the building of a larger church as part of a monastery with the surviving bell tower, erected in 1413–1414. This was suppressed by papal bull of Sixtus IV, who made Francesco Gonzaga the titular cardinal of a new collegiate church in 1472.

A model was made by Antonio Manetti and the commission was assigned to Leon Battista Alberti, who took the Etruscan temple as his model for an edifice to accommodate the multitudes flocking to worship the holy relic. Alberti died on 12 June 1472, two months before the demolition of the Romanesque church. Luca Fancelli had already taken over the project the previous year.

Independent of the church due to some pre-existing structures, the façade was designed, like that of San Sebastiano, as a gateway between the city and the temple. Classical in conception, it consists of a single central arch flanked by pilasters with capitals and smaller arches on both sides. The interior develops the proportional rhythm of the façade in a ratio of 3:4. The barrel vault receives light from a deep oculus on top of the façade reminiscent of Roman baths. The plan of the aisleless church with an alternation of open and closed chapels on either side is governed by the 6:5 proportional ratio typical of the Etruscan temple.

The first major work after the interruption from 1494 to 1530 was the construction of the dome, designed by the architect Filippo Juvarra, in 1732. The interior walls and ceiling were not decorated until the period 1780–1792. The monuments to Pietro Strozzi and Gerolamo Andreasi, designed by Giulio Romano respectively in 1529 and c. 1534, were installed, again respectively, in the left transept in 1805 and the Petrozzani Chapel in 1785.

Wittkower 1964, pp. 49–50; pp. 55–56; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 105–107; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 80; Poltronieri 1989, no. 3; no. 6; Jacqueline Burkhardt, "Il monumento Strozzi nel Sant'Andrea di Mantova"; Amedeo Belluzzi, "Il monumento a Gerolamo Andreasi nel Sant'Andrea di Mantova" and "Il monumento Cantelmi nel Sant'Andrea di Mantova," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 561–563; pp. 564–565; p. 566; Carpeggiani 1994, pp. 49–52; Adorni, 2012, pp. 152–154.



## House of Andrea Mantegna

1476–1496

Andrea Mantegna (attrib.)

Via Giovanni Acerbi 47



A cornerstone on the brick façade of the house, built on land given to Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506) by Ludovico II Gonzaga after the completion of the Camera degli Sposi or Bridal Chamber, bears the date of 1476. Construction began that year but took a long time due to economic problems. The artist did not move in until 1495 and lived there for only six years, as Francesco II Gonzaga required him to relinquish it in 1502.

Square in plan with a side measurement of approximately 25 metres, the house is characterized by a circular central courtyard with four rounded archways on the orthogonal axes. This has been variously interpreted as an Albertian variation on the atrium of the Roman house, an originally covered entrance of the kind characterizing local farmhouses and villas in the Veneto region, and a courtyard for the display of ancient remains, as suggested by the inscription *Ab Olympo* on the central architrave.

The ground floor of the two-storey building probably housed a workshop with associated facilities and the upper floor the artist's studio and living quarters, as suggested by the presence of internal horizontal subdivisions and a well. All that survives of the original fresco decoration of the interior walls are some fragments, above all coats of arms and inscriptions attesting to the artist's relationship with Ludovico Gonzaga.

During the numerous changes of ownership, the house underwent major alterations,

including incorporation into a larger building at the beginning of the 17th century, and was also put to different uses, serving also as the agricultural school of the Istituto Tecnico Pitentino in 1868. Renovation by the engineer Salvadori in 1878 concealed the original proportions of the façade.

The house was finally freed of accretions and regained its original appearance through work carried out in the period 1940–1943 by Raffaello Niccoli and then Piero Gazzola, who restored the entrance and staircase as well as the windows on the basis of one surviving specimen on the west side. Declared a national monument on 2 August 1945, the house now serves as a cultural centre.

Marani, Perina 1961, pp. 147–150; Carpeggiani 1994, pp. 40–44; Gianfranco Ferlisi, *Ab Olympo. Il Mantegna e la sua dimora*, Mantova 1995; Roberto Brunelli, *Vita di Andrea Mantegna Pittore*, Tre Lune Edizioni, Mantova 2006, pp. 85–86.





## Complex of San Cristoforo

1479; 1797

unknown; Paolo Pozzo; Antonio Colonna

Via Giulio Romano 1–5, Via Giovanni Acerbi,  
Via Nazario Sauro 3–5



The site was originally occupied by an oratory dedicated to St Anne, granted to Pietro da Morrone in 1273 to house monks of the Celestine order. The monastery expanded under the protection of Paola Malatesta, wife of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, and a small hospital was added around 1415. Built in 1479, the church of San Cristoforo incorporated the first chapel on the right of the oratory together with the painting *The Holy Family* by Cesare da Sesto. The Olivetans of Santa Maria del Gradaro took over the monastery from the Celestines in 1775 and it was suppressed some time later. No longer a place of worship, the church was used as a barracks and depot, thus initiating an ongoing period of deterioration and despoliation. The 15th-century nave, with a taller central aisle, the decorative blind arcade or Lombard band and the now closed arched entrance and large rose window on the façade can be seen from the outside.

In 1797, the royal architect Paolo Pozzo planned the conversion of the monastery – actually, restoration work was carried out by Antonio Colonna – into a building of the military administration and designed the long façade on the street with two levels of windows divided horizontally by a stringcourse. The entrance in the centre and long passageway provide access to the garden in the rear with a courtyard on either side. During the period of the Italian Social Republic the complex served as the

barracks of the Marcello Turchetti Black Brigade and a detention centre for political prisoners. Subsequently used as emergency accommodation for families made homeless by the Allied bombing, it was occupied by an antique furniture shop and workshop from the post-war period until 1999. Also known as the Palazzo del Carmelino, the complex is military property. After partial collapse of the roof and subsequent repairs to ensure safety in 2016, the church is now used for cultural events. Severely altered and in a poor state of preservation, the building is now divided into seventeen apartments for army personnel.

Marani, Perina 1961, p. 14; Stefano L'Occaso, "San Cristoforo," in Golinelli Berto 2009, pp. 59–77.





## Casa Menozzi or Palazzina Valenti

1480

Luca Fancelli (attrib.)

Via Pietro Frattini 5–5A

Located on the west side of Palazzo Valenti, the house belonged first to the Arrivabene family, to the Valenti Gonzaga family as from 1690, and finally to the sculptor Giuseppe Menozzi (1895–1966), the author of the monument in Piazza Virgiliana (1927).

A good example of the early Renaissance in Mantua, the two-storey building plus attic is attributed to Luca Fancelli by virtue of the free and harmonious composition of the windows and the design of frames and stringcourses in sgraffito terracotta. The arched entrance rests on two small corner pillars. The façade is characterized by a terracotta section at the top corresponding to the attic with five statues in niches divided by spiral pilasters, the Angel of the Annunciation to the left and the Virgin Annunciate to the right with three apostles in the middle.

In 1958, after Giuseppe Menozzi drew attention to their poor state of preservation, the statues were restored and added to the collection of terracotta works in the Palazzo Ducale. This provided an opportunity for examination by Giovanni Paccagnini, heritage superintendent in Mantua from 1952 to 1973, who put forward an attribution to Andrea Mantegna. The artist had indeed produced terracotta models to be cast in bronze for a large arch of St Anselm, initially commissioned by Ludovico Gonzaga from Donatello in 1450 and then assigned to Mantegna for the Diet of Mantua, convened by Pius II in 1459. The statues of the Evangelist and St Peter display

stylistic similarities with the frescoes painted by Mantegna during the same period in the Ovetari Chapel in Padua. The other three statues, of the Virgin, the angel and St Paul, would instead have been produced at a later date when the arch project was taken up again by Mantegna in Florence around 1466. After 1482, when it was proposed to combine the arch of St Anselm with the funerary monument of Barbara of Brandenburg, the remaining statues ended up on the façade of the house built by Fancelli. The original works are now in the Museo della Città in Palazzo San Sebastiano.



## Palazzo Arrivabene

1481; 1750

Luca Fancelli

Via Fratelli Bandiera 18–20, Via Giovanni Arrivabene



As stated in the inscription on the corner, the foundations were laid by the brothers Giovanni and Giovanpietro Arrivabene in 1481, the fourth year of the reign of Federico, third marquis of Mantua. In 1479, two years before the Florentine architect Luca Fancelli (1430–1502) was commissioned, the Holy Roman Emperor granted the Arrivabene the title of counts palatine, subsequently confirmed in 1590 by Vincenzo Gonzaga. Giampietro Arrivabene was appointed bishop of Urbino in 1491.

The four storeys of the massive rectangular palace rise around a central courtyard dominated by a high tower on the northeast corner, the lower part of which presents a corner balcony with wrought-iron railing and the top level two large windows on each side. The walls of all the sections are pierced by deep oculi beneath the eaves and some of the interiors present frescoes attributed to Bazzani and Berigny.

Repeatedly registered as a protected building and in a very poor state of preservation, also in structural terms, the palace was the object of a plan for urgent work on the roof at the beginning of 2001. The City Council granted its use for at least 60 years to a suitable private concern for conversion into a luxury hotel or apartments, offices and shops, and the Siclafin real estate company put in the highest bid at the auction held on 3 September 2001. Renovation work began in January 2003 and ended in 2006.

The exterior of the small house at number 20 Via Fratelli Bandiera, built in 1750 as an extension of Palazzo Arrivabene, presents a bottom section with three arched openings and rustication up to the window sills of a short section of ashlar masonry. Above this is a deep terrace with balustrade and the flamboyant baroque façade, continuing on the sides, of a double-height room. Part of the building is now used as a bed & breakfast.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 221.





## Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria

1495–1496

Bernardino Ghisolfo

Via Domenico Fernelli 15, Via Claudio Monteverdi 1,  
Vicolo Fieno



The church stands on the site of a house bought from the Scaldamazzi family by the Jewish banker Daniele Norsa da Villafranca in 1493. The new owner had a sacred image of the Madonna and Child removed from the façade for fear of vandalism by permission of the bishop. This gave rise to outcry and tension, first with anonymous comments in verse and drawings of saints on the wall, then with stones thrown during the Ascension day procession in May 1495, and finally with an injunction requiring the Norsa family to replace the image removed with a new one celebrating the victory over the French at Fornovo (6 July 1495), which Andrea Mantegna was commissioned to produce. The house was instead demolished and, as proposed by the Augustinian friar Girolamo Redini, Francesco II Gonzaga ordered the erection of Sancta Maria della Vittoria, a votive church with characteristics of a still medieval nature, designed by Bernardino Ghisolfo (1430–1517). The *Madonna of Victory* (tempera on canvas) was borne in procession on 6 July 1496 from Mantegna's house to the new church, where it remained until its removal to the Louvre in 1797. Having taken over the edifice in 1499, the Hieronymite friars commissioned a painting around 1515 from an unknown artist of the Lombard school. Now in Sant'Andrea, the *Virgin with a Jewish Family* (tempera on canvas) bears the inscription "*Debellata Hebraeorum Temeritate*" and shows Daniele

Norsa with his son Isacco and their wives in the lower section. Deconsecrated at the end of the 18th century after the sacking of Mantua by the French, the church is now municipal property and houses the association of friends of Palazzo Te and the city's museums. A plaque placed on the façade by the entrance in 1945 commemorates the priest Eugenio Leoni, killed by German troops on 12 September 1943.





## Palazzo Guidi di Bagno, today offices of the prefecture and provincial council

15th–16th century; 1730–1759; 1854–1857 unknown; Giovanni Maria Borsotti (interiors); Giovanni Cherubini (façade)

Via Principe Amedeo 30–34,  
Via Madonna dell'Orto, Via Mazzini

The Florentine Guido di Bagno, related to the Gonzaga family and resident in Mantua as from 1404, lived in this area as from 1429. In 1498 the canon Lodovico di Guido di Bagno began a series of purchases and incorporations to enlarge the property, the surviving elements of which comprise the Chamber of Grotesques (1537) on the ground floor and the Corridor of Coats of Arms (1575) on the first floor of the south wing. In 1710 the marquis Giovanfrancesco became sole owner of the building, which was decorated in accordance with the late-baroque taste by Giovanni Maria Borsotti as from 1730. The leading artists of the time worked on the seven rooms of the New Apartment in the north wing. The marble staircase in the east wing leading to the Bazzani Room was built between 1755 and 1759 with four statues at the ends of the two flights.

Between 1854 and 1857, in preparation for the marriage of Galeazzo di Bagno and Virginia Chigi, Giovanni Cherubini designed the main façade so as to present an overall view in relation to the width of the street, reorganizing the 58-metre extension with two entrances and a regular array of windows on three levels above a marble socle, two metres in height, which continues around the corner for a stretch of the street to the north. The marquis Giuseppe di Bagno agreed in the summer of 1919 to sell the building, which was converted into offices for the provincial council and the prefecture. Flanking the

central staircase at the first level are two low-relief panels entitled *Legionaries*, produced by Aldo Andreani in 1937 as models for larger sculptures for a public building. The Rangoni house to the right of the façade was annexed in October 1941. The east wing and the meeting hall were damaged by a bomb on 11 November 1944 and urgent work was carried out three years later to shelter and ensure the safety of the internal structures. The period 1957–1958 saw the construction of a building in the second courtyard and the prefecture garden.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 264; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 11 fig. 16; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 142; p. 144; Gianfranco Ferlisi, *Palazzo di Bagno a Mantova: guida ad un percorso lungo cinque secoli*, Mantova 2002; Ugo Bazzotti, Daniela Ferrari (eds.), *La dimora Guidi di Bagno. Palazzo del governo*, Editoriale Sometti, Mantova 2003.



## Palazzo San Sebastiano, now the Museo della Città

1506–1508

Gerolamo Arcari; Bernardino Ghisolfo

Largo XXIV Maggio 11–13, Viale della Repubblica,  
Viale Antonio Gioppi 8



The palace was built by Francesco II Gonzaga behind the Porta Pusterla as a residence and the hall on the upper floor was used to hang the nine canvases of Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* series. The work took place over two years between 1506 and 1508 under the supervision of the architects Gerolamo Arcari and Bernardino Ghisolfo. The inner courtyard has a portico of seven arches supported by Corinthian columns. The rebuilding of the Porta Pusterla in 1530 led to an increase in height and the creation of a roof garden, which was annexed to the palace. The apartment, where Francesco was to die in 1519, consists of a series of rooms named after the pictorial decorations by Lorenzo Leonbruno and Matteo and Lorenzo Costa. The coffered ceiling of gilded wood representing a maze and bearing the inscription "*Forse che sì forse che no*" (Perhaps So, Perhaps Not) was later moved to the Ducal Apartment of Vincenzo I. Having declined in importance due to the transfer of works to other palaces and occupied by secondary branches of the Gonzaga family, Palazzo San Sebastiano was converted into a barracks in 1756, a hospital in 1786 and a lazaretto in 1883. This involved substantial modifications, not least with the municipal demolition in the period 1902–1905 of the Porta Pusterla and a turret as well as the enclosure of the portico with a wall in 1910. The building was used in the 20th century as a public baths, nursing home,

high school, music school and Arci Salardi recreational centre. The period 1999–2003 saw renovation and 19 March 2005 the inauguration of the Museo della Città, with seven thematic sections and the Museo del Risorgimento. Fragments of the external fresco decoration have been salvaged as well as the series of paintings in the Loggia of Marbles as well as the rooms of the Sun, the Crucible and the Arrows. 17th-century copies of the *Triumphs of Caesar* are exhibited, the originals being now in Hampton Court, as well as the seated statue of Virgil and some friezes from the Temple of San Sebastiano.





## Palazzo Te

1525–1630

Giulio Romano; interventions  
by Nicolò Sebregondi and Paolo Pozzo

Viale Te



Based on the model of the suburban villa, Giulio Romano's first architectural work in Mantua was commissioned by Federico II Gonzaga for an area outside the walls called Teieto or Te. This new building for private leisure and hospitality marks the southern end of the processional way known as the Gonzaga axis. Based on the layout of the Roman *domus*, Palazzo Te comprises three apartments and a series of service areas, on the west and south sides, on two orthogonal axes that intersect in a central courtyard. The longitudinal axis frames the vista from the entrance on the west side to the garden and beyond. As in other projects, Giulio worked on a site with existing structures, in this case the Gonzaga stables.

Construction began at the end of 1525 and continued into the second half of the century with a series of plans and operations. Giovanni Catelani modified the garden apartment with the addition of a grotto for Vincenzo II Gonzaga between 1587 and 1595, and Nicolò Sebregondi built the orangeries and the semi-circular colonnade or exedra, which delimits the large garden to the east, for Carlo II Gonzaga Nevers after the sacking of Mantua (1630). After a period of military use and degradation in the first half of the 18th century, the palace regained some importance as from 1775, when Maria Theresa of Austria decided that it would house the agricultural college of the Accademia Virgiliana, and the architect Paolo Pozzo carried out work on the floors

of the inside rooms, built the tympanum on the façade overlooking the fish ponds, and demolished the attic that crowned the building as well as the belvedere on the north loggia. French troops were quartered in the building during the period 1796–1797 and a public park with racecourse and entrances was designed by Giovanni Antonio Antolini, royal architect and inspector, for the area outside it in 1806.

The covering of the Fossa Magistrale canal early in the 20th century altered the relationship of Palazzo Te with the city and its role was transformed with the subsequent construction of infrastructures in the area, including the railway, a cattle market and sports facilities.

Bellonci 1947, pp. 110–111; p. 153; Belluzzi, Capezzali 1976; Gombrich 1984; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 47–102; Poltronieri 1989, no. 1; Amedeo Belluzzi and Kurt W. Forster, "Palazzo Te," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 316–332; Adorni 2012, pp. 20–39.





## House of Giulio Romano

1532–1544; 1800  
Giulio Romano; Paolo Pozzo

Via Carlo Poma 18

On 28 April 1531, for the sum of 350 gold ducats, Giulio Romano bought a building in the Unicorno district and a lease on the adjacent one in order to build himself a house. The joining of the two properties affected both the interior layout and the design of the façade with an entrance on the third of the six bays, adapted to the rhythm of the load-bearing walls. The bottom storey comprised a professional studio on the street and a large antique portico with five bays on the courtyard, where Giulio arranged “many antiquities brought from Rome and others received from the duke” (Vasari). The lounge with a fireplace, frescoed by Giulio and his pupils, is on the upper floor.

The façade on the street is not based on architectural orders but characterized by a cornice that runs horizontally at the level of the upper window sills and alters its course to form a pediment over the arched doorway, which has an exposed architrave marking its effective height. The rusticated facing becomes smoother on the upper storey, where aedicula windows are set in recessed arches. A statue of Mercury, consisting of an ancient marble torso completed with terracotta and stucco additions, is placed over the entrance. The denticulate cornice has a frieze with festoons supported by ram’s heads and small round windows.

Paolo Pozzo extended the façade in 1800 by two bays on the right, moving the entrance into the fifth bay in order “to preserve all the

symmetries and decorations.” He also lowered the bottoms of the ground-floor windows. The originally polychrome façade, the colouring of which was probably lost during Pozzo’s alterations, adopted the model of the ancient gallery in order to assert the owner’s success and intellectual status. In 1969–1970 Aldo Andreani carried out restoration work on the façade of the house, then owned by cousins on the side of his mother Felicita Risi.

Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 128–140; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 39 note 2; p. 219; Poltronieri 1989, no. 13; F. Paolo Fiore, “La casa di Giulio,” in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 480–483; Adorni 2012, pp. 56–63; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 34; Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 22 fig.; p. 242; p. 253.



Meat and fish markets

1536–1546

Giulio Romano

Lungorio IV Novembre, Via Pescherie,  
Via Giacomo Matteotti



Giulio Romano, the ducal architect and civil engineer in Mantua, informed Federico Gonzaga on 26–28 October 1536 that work had begun on the meat market with the construction of six pillars. Known as the Beccherie, the market stretches on two floors along the Rio canal between two bridges, Ponte San Silvestro and Ponte Pescherie. The lower floor, level with the canal, is an arched portico with Corinthian columns into which water was channelled for sanitation. The upper presented a close, regular array of vertical windows with no frame, as seen in an engraving of 1829 by Lanfranco Puzzi, which shows the arched entrance and windows with pediments of the rusticated west end. Adjoining the Beccherie, the old fish market or Pescherie is mentioned by Ludovico da Gattico as under construction in a letter of 1546. Built by Giulio Romano on the model of the 15th-century shop with portico within the historical fabric and on the medieval bridge, it presents two parallel arcades with rustication, arches on pillars and a low attic with horizontal windows framed by pilasters beneath a denticulated cornice. The pillars of the west portico differ in size and are not aligned, which has prompted more than one scholar to suggest building on a pre-existing structure. The east portico presents six bays, the first of which to the north is embedded into a building, and provides access to the medieval warehouses along the canal, which can also be reached by a tunnel from the Beccherie.

The upper floor of the Beccherie collapsed in the middle in 1843 and was completely demolished in 1877–1878. The arches on the Rio, then closed, were knocked down and replaced with twenty new bays on Doric columns. The Pescherie underwent restoration in 1882 and 1931 as well as extension at either end. The friary and church of San Domenico were demolished in 1925 to build the new thoroughfare of Via Crispi, while the bell tower has survived in the present layout of the road along the canal.

Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 126–128; Poltronieri 1989, no. 7; no. 15; F. Paolo Fiore, "Beccherie e pescherie," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 486–487; Jacometti 1999, p. 202; Adorni 2012, pp. 80–84.





## Porta Giulia or Porta della Cittadella

1542–1549

Giulio Romano

Cittadella district, Piazza Porta Giulia



The construction of the Cittadella di Porto, a pentagonal fortified outpost to defend the Mulini bridge and dam, commenced in October 1531 by order of Federico II Gonzaga. The work was initially supervised by a certain De Cappel (or Capino), commander of the guard, and then by Carlo Nuvolone. After coming to a halt in 1538, it began again in 1542 under the regency of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and his wife Margherita Paleologo.

It is probably then that Giulio Romano was commissioned to design the Porta Giulia city gate. The inner and outer façades are made still more imposing by the adoption of a rusticated Doric style. Four ashlar pilasters support a Doric entablature with decorated pediment. The central arched gateway is flanked by two smaller rectangular openings. The attic section on top of the gate bears a plaque and coat of arms. The interior is a large single space with a cross-section into which a circle can be perfectly inscribed. It has a barrel vault, engaged columns (with the bases now missing) along the walls and fine decoration in the panels and the blind and open doorways. It could be used to turn weapons round in preparation for parade formations. The panel over the right entrance on the outer façade bears the probable date of completion, 1549, three years after the architect's death. Restoration work was required as early as 1551 due to partial collapse when the foundations gave way.

A proposal to transform the monument into

the façade of the parish church of Cittadella was first put forward in 1920, during a period of deterioration, and renewed in a curious project that Aldo Andreani put forward in November 1947, by request of the parish priest Celestino Battaglia, after the bombing of the church of San Michele on 1 April 1945. The gate was restored in 1964 with the rebuilding of some sections.

Marani, Perina 1961, p. 210; pp. 220–222; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 123–126; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 39 note 2; p. 158; p. 163 fig. 1; p. 215; Manfredo Tafuri, "Porta Giulia o della Cittadella a Mantova, 1542 circa-1549," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 491–495; Poltronieri, 1989, no. 12; Adorni 2012, pp. 74–79; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 25; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Progetto di trasformazione di Porta Giulia in chiesa di Cittadella," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 228–229.





35.

## House of the Architect Bertani

1554–1556

Giovanni Battista Bertani

Via Trieste 8



This house was designed and occupied by the Mantuan architect Giovanni Battista Bertani (1516–1576). A pupil of Giulio Romano and his successor as superintendent of ducal building in 1549, Bertani also designed the apartments of Guglielmo Gonzaga and the basilica of Santa Barbara.

The result of work carried out between 1554 and 1556 on an existing building, the architect's three-storey house has a façade evidently influenced by his study of Vitruvius's *De Architectura*, parts of which he commented on in a treatise published two years later and including a method for designing the volutes of the Ionic capital. With a mannerist invention of didactic character, Bertani placed a huge Ionic semi-column of marble on the left of the front door with a carved capital and a garland about halfway up. In a symmetrical position on the right of the door, a marble pilaster represents the same column, turned through an angle of 180 degrees, in longitudinal section inscribed with measurements, proportions and the instructions for design. Plaques bearing comments on *De Architectura* are placed beneath the ground-floor windows.

In 1567, ten years after publishing his treatise with a dedication to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, Bertani was imprisoned by the Inquisition in the friary of San Domenico on suspicion of Protestant sympathies and reinstated only after public recantation on 16 May 1568.

The house, which is still a private home, appears to contain no elements of architectural importance.

Giovanni Battista Bertani, *Degli oscuri e difficili passi dell'opera ionica di Vitruvio...*, Venturino Ruffinello, Mantova 1558; Carpeggiani 1994.



## Palazzo Colloredo

1570; 1670

Giovanni Battista Bertani (attrib.)

Via Giuseppe Verdi 13–19

Projecting slightly onto the street, the building is characterized by the bold chiaroscuro effect of its façade with rusticated surfaces in the four arches of the portico, the two stringcourses dividing the three storeys, and the window frames.

Five double-order Doric pilasters rise from the stringcourse above the portico, embellished with diamond reliefs, to cadence the windows of the two upper levels, which present an alternation of triangular pediments and low arches on the first floor and lintels on the second. The cornice is characterized by a close array of brackets into which the small windows of the attic are inserted. The façade, which presents various similarities with the nearby Palazzo Canossa, was probably reworked in the second half of the 17th century.

The attribution to Giulio Romano on stylistic grounds put forward by Frederick Hartt was challenged first by Ercolano Marani, who regards the building and Bertani's work in general as underrated, and subsequently by Bruno Adorni for the lack of documentary evidence. Marani instead attributes the building to Giovanni Battista Bertani by virtue of its façade of "unconventional architecture, with an even number of arches and windows, like the arches of the Prato di Castello and the Mostra Courtyard, and the strangely asymmetrical pediments on the windows, so that the façade is like a fragment of a composition eluding any idea of

a set limit, almost as though shaped by chance rather than reason."

The building is in a good state of preservation with commercial premises on the ground floor.

Marani, Perina 1965, pp. 29–30; note 124 p. 59;  
Adorni 2012, p. 84 and note 23.





## Palazzo Valenti Gonzaga

1577; 1670

Nicolò Sebregondi; Frans Geffels;  
Giovanni Battista Barberini

Via Pietro Frattini 7



The knight Valente Valenti, granted the right to bear the Gonzaga surname and coat of arms by decree of Francesco II in 1518, had an imposing palace built in the Cervo district in 1577. The tall brick façade on the street with its rhythmic horizontal array of windows and inclined socle with diamond-shaped slabs of white stone is the work of the architect Niccolò Sebregondi (1585–1652), as are the internal courtyard and portico with Ionic columns.

The Marquis Odoardo Valenti Gonzaga had the palace renovated in 1670 and made it one of the city's greatest works of baroque architecture. The Flemish architect Frans Geffels (1625–1694) reworked the façades of the inner courtyard, which previously contained a gigantic statue of Jove and painted decorations combined with stucco reliefs. The façade to the rear of the courtyard presents elements in precarious balance that contribute to the effect of a classical model drained of gravity and solidity. The rooms on the first floor, whose double height is made externally visible by the blind openings of the attic, contain frescoes by Geffels as well as decorative stuccowork and eighteen statues by Giovanni Battista Barberini (1625–1691) from Val d'Intelvi. The east wing comprises the Room of Coats of Arms, the Room of the Triumph of Time over Fame, the chapel and a room with *The Return of the Prodigal Son* painted by Geffels on the ceiling. The wing on the street comprises the Octagon over

the entrance, the Room of the Monogram and a gallery. The west wing contains the Chamber of Architectural Views, the Chamber of Ganymede, the Bedroom, the Room of the Panoply and the Room of the Seasons. With the decline of the family over the years, the palace was stripped, divided up to house businesses and workshops, and then abandoned. After restoration and renovation carried out by a company set up in 1981, the building now houses the Galleria Museo Valenti Gonzaga on the first floor as well as residential apartments, offices and a bank in the courtyard.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 213; notes 34–35 p. 233;  
Gironi, Sordi 2017.





38.

## House on Via Poma

c. 1580

Giulio Romano (uncertain attribution)

Via Carlo Poma 22

This small, two-storey house presents a façade of three bays on Via Poma not far from the house of Giulio Romano.

The lower section presents four Tuscan pilasters, four steps leading up to an arched entrance in the centre of a broad frame beneath a bust of the Madonna and Child within a garland, flanked on either side by a rectangular trabeated window. Above a double-cornice stringcourse with capitals, the upper section presents Ionic pilasters, twinned at either end, framing three aediculae windows, the largest in the centre with a triangular pediment and the others with low arches. The underside of the projecting cornice is decorated with a close array of small brackets.

The attribution to Giulio Romano on stylistic grounds put forward by Frederick Hartt was challenged by Paolo Carpeggiani in 1987 and then by Bruno Adorni in 2012 due to the lack of supporting documentary evidence: "It must be stated that the house on Via Poma certainly reflects the design of an artist with a certain degree of culture capable of developing his accumulated academic knowledge in vernacular terms" (Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina, 1987). The original decoration has survived in some rooms of the house, which was restored in 2012.

Hartt 1958; Marani, Perina 1961, p. 209;  
Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, pp. 160–161;  
Adorni 2012, p. 84 and note 23.



## Palazzo dell'Archivio di Stato and former Church of SS. Trinità

1584; 1587–1591; 1676–1678  
unknown; Giovanni Battista Barberini

Via Roberto Ardigò 9–11, Largo S. Luigi Gonzaga 1,  
Via Dottrina Cristiana 4–4A



The various buildings in this area, including the tower of the Gambulini family bought in 1289 by Guido Corradi, father of Ludovico I Gonzaga, came into the possession of Aloisio Gonzaga, Marquis of Castel Goffredo. It was in his palace that his comrade in arms Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, wounded in the battle at Governolo against the landsknechts, died on 30 November 1526. Guglielmo Gonzaga and the merchant Alessandro Costa divided the property between them in the second half of the century. Costa sold a building and the tower to the Jesuits in 1584, whereupon the Duke also donated a building on the order, who used the premises for a monastery and a college.

The new church of the college was dedicated to the Holy Trinity and consecrated in 1591. The Archduchess Eleanor of Austria, Duchess of Mantua and benefactress of the Society of Jesus, was buried there three years later. The octagonal sacristy, probably designed and decorated by Giovanni Battista Barberini, was built to the rear of the church in the period 1676–1678.

The Jesuit college was suppressed in 1773. The part of the huge block adjoining the church was used in 1776 to accommodate the Augustinians from Sant'Agnese, after which the structure became a military depot. The state archives, instituted in 1868 after the annexation of Mantua to the Kingdom of Italy, was definitively transferred from the Palazzo Ducale in 1883 to this part of

the complex, restructured together with the church to contain the records and offices. The structure was divided into lots and subjected to radical restoration and renovation under the guidance of Daniela Ferrari from 1993 to 2006. The central aisle of the church became the main repository in 1994–1996, the archives opened to the public in 2000, the main entrance on Via Ardigò was inaugurated in 2002, and the restoration of the premises on Via Dottrina Cristiana was completed in 2006 with the conversion of the sacristy into a conference hall and exhibition centre.

Bellonci 1947, p. 230; p. 255; Jacometti 1999, pp. 182–183.



# Church of Santi Simone e Giuda

1593–1594  
unknown

Via Domenico Fernelli 17, Via Giovanni Arrivabene,  
Via Claudio Monteverdi



The church, one of the oldest in Mantua, was originally a small Lombard-Carolingian oratory (7th–8th century), elongated towards the front in the 11th–12th century. The bell tower on the right was erected early in the 15th century. In 1593 it was rebuilt by the reverend Geronimo de Belledis for the Bishop Francesco Gonzaga with the addition of two side aisles. The wedding of Claudio Monteverdi, musician to the court, and Claudia Cattaneo was celebrated there on 20 May 1599. The neoclassical 17th-century façade, which corrects the internal asymmetry of the aisles, is characterized by two pairs of pilasters with a stone base and composite capitals that frame the portal and the large rectangular window, and support the pediment, a section of which is recessed to give a dynamic broken effect. The symmetrical outer wings, corresponding to the side aisles, have a simple cornice and rectangular windows in the centre. The unadorned interior dates from the restoration of 1775, which saw the construction of the barrel vault and the chapels on the right side as well as the elongation of the apse behind the high altar. The side aisles present altars of faux marble stripped of their original furnishings. The altars of the Madonna dell'Orto (by Antonio Maria Viani, buried in the church in accordance with his wishes) and the Madonna della Visitazione are located on the left, and the chapels of Sant'Anselmo and the Vergine Concetta on the right. To the right of the entrance,

a plaque with an inscription in Italian and English, installed in 1914, commemorates the Scottish prodigy James Crichton, known as the Admirable Crichton, who was in the service of Guglielmo Gonzaga when he was attacked in an ambush by the duke's son Vincenzo on the night of 3 July 1582 and died despite the aid provided by some friars on the spot. Requisitioned by the French in 1799 to serve as a depot for the revolutionary troops, the church was subordinated to the parish of Sant'Andrea in 1805 and underwent restoration in 1827. Closed in 2003 due to its poor state of preservation, it was carefully restored over the period 2005–2006. The Tridentine Mass has been celebrated there in Latin on Saturdays and pre-festive days since 2008.

Bellonci 1947, pp. 76–78; Manuela Novellini, Gianfranco Ferlisi, *La chiesa dei Santi Simone e Giuda in Mantova. Dalle origini al recupero: una storia lunga più di dieci secoli*, Associazione Amici di San Simone e Giuda, Mantova 2007.





## Palazzo Guerrieri Gonzaga e Colloredo, now Palazzo di Giustizia

1597–1600

Antonio Maria Viani

Via Poma 11

The land with a building under construction was bought in 1497 by Count Giacomo Boschetti, brother-in-law of Baldassarre Castiglione, and bequeathed to Federico II Gonzaga, the lover of his daughter Isabella. At the end of the 16th century the building was the property of Francesco Gonzaga, Isabella's heir, who sold it to Count Giovanni Battista Guerrieri Gonzaga in 1597. The new owner, minister to Vincenzo I and often employed as supervisor of ducal construction work, commissioned Antonio Maria Viani to rebuild the edifice.

The unusual façade on the street presents elements seldom or even never previously used in the city: a tall ashlar base with alternating bands of two different heights and finishes; windows with flat cornices and frames; the upper section with a giant order made up of Ionic engaged columns melded with gigantic herms and continuing upwards past the attic windows; and first-floor windows with frames of marble, like the balustrades inserted into the stringcourse. The present entrance was added at the end of the 19th century by Gian Francesco Jano. The complex interior is decorated with stucco work and paintings in various parts, including the staircase to the right of the entrance, the winter apartments of the Count and of his consort Barbara Rangoni, and the apartment in the west wing.

Later owned by the Colloredo family, the property was purchased by the city council

in 1872 to house the judicial offices of the court. Detention cells communicating with the courtrooms were built around 1935. Luigi Moretti wrote in 1952 of the building's formal physicality, as illustrated by a close-up photograph of two ashlar slabs in the entrance: "The discourse or song of a surface of ancient architecture is concentrated, between the pauses of the quiet spaces, in the mouldings and in those geometric corrugations [...] of extraordinarily free forms such as the splendid ashlar of Palazzo Colloredo in Mantua, where the corroded material seethes like a dark torrent."

Luigi Moretti, "Valori della modanatura," in *Spazio*, no. 6, December 1951 – April 1952, p. 12; Girondi 2013, pp. 100–135.



## Palazzo Valentini and the Valentini Gardens

16th century; 1830  
School of Giulio Romano (attrib.)

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 52,  
Via Anton Maria Viani 7



The Neoclassical façade built during renovation of the 16th-century building is dated 1830. The lower storey of ashlar with entrance and windows of reduced height confers impetus on the upper section, which has a central pseudo-portico with Ionic half-columns and pilasters, tall windows and a pediment above. The lower windows at the sides are crowned by small heads in tondos. Bruno Adorni suggests the involvement of Giulio Romano in the courtyard: "In the absence of documentation [...] little can be said about the courtyard of Palazzo Valentini [...] where pointed arches are covered with rustication that recalls the Corte Rustica and Palazzo Te with the regular arrangement of four slabs projecting over the pillars and single slabs under the windows. The crowning cornice also recalls Giulio with the faux ends of beams or large dentils." He goes on to observe that these elements may also be later or have involved Covo, the Roman architect's assistant. A staircase with twin Ionic columns leading to the first floor is located on the passageway to the garden. Photographs taken by Sandro Calzolari in the early 1950s provide documentation of the interiors, the furnishings and the vaulted and coffered ceilings. A large balcony looks onto the garden, which was owned by the Valentini family until 1950 and then became public park with the possibility of a crossing from Corso Vittorio Emanuele to the area behind Via Chiassi. It is perhaps the public character

assumed by the entrance hall and courtyard, which also housed Umberto Ghiraldini's Cormorano dance hall at a certain point, that led to some parts becoming unrecognizable through alterations. In July 2016, after a period of physical and social decline, the Valentini Garden reopened to the public after restoration by the municipal authorities with the involvement of associations and citizens.

Adorni 2012, p. 84 and note 23.





## Church and Convent of Santa Maria dell'Orsola

1603–1620

Antonio Maria Viani

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 45, Via Ivanoe Bonomi 1–3



The history of the complex is bound up with Margherita Gonzaga, sister of Vincenzo I and widow of Alfonso II d'Este, duke of Ferrara, who returned to Mantua in 1597 and decided to retire into religious life. On 26 July 1603 she joined the Ursulines in the palace of Fulvio Gonzaga, to which the adjoining buildings of Orfeo Fermini were then annexed, followed in 1606 by those of Marcello Donati. It was with these properties, in 1603, that Antonio Maria Viani began the constriction of the convent where Margherita was to live until her death in 1618, which was still unfinished two years later. The first stone of the church was laid on 26 June 1608, as celebrated by Domenico Fetti's painting *Antonio Maria Viani Presenting the Model of Sant'Orsola to Margherita Gonzaga*, now in the Palazzo Ducale. The façade, which presents a horizontal development of marked physicality due to the relief of its elements, is detached from the large octagonal lantern tower above. A single order of twin Corinthian columns of Verona marble with fluted shafts on tall pedestals divides the framed entrance with its curved arch and the aediculae with niches in the lateral intervals. The strongly projecting entablature and pediment in the central section emphasize the rhythm of the façade. The lantern tower has simple arched openings on all sides and a continuous denticulated cornice. The bell tower is crowned by an unusual octagonal spire, recalling the top of the lantern tower, over a belfry with Doric aediculae and engaged

columns at the corners. The octagonal interior of the church, which displays characteristics of Lombard architecture, has shallow spaces and chapels of various ages on all sides. Suppressed by Joseph II between 1782 and 1786, the convent was converted into a barracks and then a civilian hospital. The construction of Via Bonomi led to almost complete demolition in 1930. The surviving elements comprise the church and a portico of six arches on columns on the west side.

Bellonci 1947, p. 241; Marani, Perina 1965, p. 172; notes 72–73 pp. 195–196; Gironi 2013, pp. 68–71; figs. 86–94 pp. 81–84.





## Church of San Maurizio

1609–1619; 1731–1746

Antonio Maria Viani

Via Giovanni Chiassi 33–35, Via Anton Maria Viani,  
Via Luigi Einaudi 8

The history of San Maurizio is bound up with the move of the Theatine order in 1605 from the Borre district to what is now Via Chiassi, where they bought land with the aid of donations and the foundations of the church were laid early in 1610. The church is mentioned, with the main and two secondary chapels, in the first will (1612) of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, who was buried there in 1627. The choir was completed in 1614 under the supervision of Antonio Maria Viani, superintendent of ducal building, and the church was consecrated two years later. Despite the support of numerous donors, shortage of funds meant that Viani's plans were only partially realized and the work took a long time. While the side chapels and ceiling were completed in 1619, it was only after work resumed in 1713 that a building in front of the church was covered over and two chapels, identifiable by the stylistic differences in their decoration, were added as well as the baroque façade. One of the most interesting aspects of the internal transformation is the progressive transition from a rectangular to an oval space in the baroque style accompanied by decorative stuccowork to frame the numerous paintings, including Ludovico Carracci's *Martyrdom of St Margaret* (1616) in the Chapel of Santa Margherita and the series of seven large canvases by Jacob Denys in the presbytery, including a view of the city in the centre. The Theatines were expelled from the city in 1797 and San Maurizio became a parish

church dedicated to St Margaret and St Maurice. During the successive periods of Austrian and then French rule, it served as an Austrian military storehouse in 1805 and as the church of San Napoleone, characterized by a collection of military plaques, from 1808 to 1814, when it was dedicated once again to San Maurizio.

The church was declared a protected building in 1953 but closed four years later due to damage incurred during bombing in World War II. The adjoining friary, converted into a barracks in the 19th century, has been the provincial headquarters of the Carabinieri police force since 1900.

Giuse Pastore, *San Maurizio in Mantova. Due secoli di vita religiosa e di cultura artistica*, 1982; Giuse Pastore, "Chiesa di San Maurizio," in Golinelli Berto, 2004, pp. 21–25; Girondi 2013, pp. 74; fig. 95 p. 84.



## Palazzo Canossa

1659–1673

Giovanni Battista Bianchi

Piazza Matilde di Canossa 1, Vicolo Albergo 2,  
Via Domanico Fernelli 1–5



The palace was built between 1659 and 1673 for the marquis Orazio Canossa of the Mantuan branch of the Veronese family. The front and side façades of the massive building present all-over rustication in the style of Giulio Romano with stucco panels bearing carved images of mythological buildings and landscapes. The entrance is flanked by twin columns of marble that support the balcony. The marble statue of a mastiff biting a bone beneath each pair of columns is the family crest. The wooden door is decorated with carved panels in low relief. The windows become gradually less massive proceeding upwards from the ground floor, which presents aediculae and grilles, to the first, where they are unframed beneath a lintel, and the top, where they are low and horizontal. The brackets of the projecting cornice are omitted in the bays over the windows to create a rhythmic effect. A tall structure with smooth plaster and three framed windows stands on the roof over the three central bays of the façade.

The scenic baroque staircase leading to the first floor, the steps of which present a sequence of volutes, is crowded with marble statues of mastiffs and, on the balustrades, of mythological figures like Hercules, Mars, Jove, Neptune and Pluto by Matteo Pedrali. The walls are decorated with frescoes of natural landscapes by Giovanni Battista Caccioli from Bologna.

Occupied by the Canossa family until halfway through the 19th century, the building was

destined for a variety of uses, including premises for a school and offices, until it was closed in the 1980s. Now privately owned, it was renovated in 2015–2017 by Massimiliano Fuksas.

A rusticated building built in 1750 with a portico of five bays, now occupied by a restaurant, stands on the north side of the piazza in front of a fountain. The small votive church of the Beata Maria Vergine del Terremoto, erected by Giovanni Tovagliari opposite the palace in 1759 to commemorate an earthquake of 1693, contains paintings by Bazzani.





## Casa del Rabbino

1680

Frans Geffels

Via Giuseppe Bertani 54, Via Governolo

Traditionally home to the rabbi and his family, this house on Via Bertani, a major road of access to the ghetto, also represented the Jewish community symbolically by virtue of its decorative elements and imposing character with respect to the overcrowded building characteristic of such restricted areas. It was built immediately after the period of severe crisis that began in 1630 with the sacking of Mantua by the Landsknecht army, an outbreak of plague and the expulsion of the Jews. The ghetto, established by order of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, had been in existence since 1612. The Flemish architect and painter Frans Geffels (1625–1694), who arrived in the city in 1659 and was appointed superintendent of ducal building, was working at the same time on the nearby Palazzo Sordi, to which the house bears some stylistic similarity.

The tall, four-storey block projects slightly onto the street and has an inner courtyard, where the presence of 15th-century architectural remnants and the difference in height with respect to the exterior suggest rebuilding for an important Jewish family.

The interesting decoration of the façade comprises an arched doorway with quoins of stone between two marble pilaster strips on tall bases that support the scrolled consoles of a balcony with a wrought-iron railing, and six stucco panels inserted between the cornices supporting the first-floor window sills. The panels bear finely worked urban views of a biblical character in low relief that constitute

exceptional representations of the Jewish homeland.

The house was spared when the ghetto was demolished in 1940 and was one of the three buildings on Via Bertani scheduled for restoration under the town-planning scheme of 1960, due recognition of its importance not only as an element of the urban morphology but also as bearing witness to an identity erased from the history of the 20th century.

Colorni, Patuzzi 2011, p. 29; Castaldini 2013, pp. 6–7; Girondi, Sordi 2017.





## Palazzo Sordi

1680

Frans Geffels; Giovanni Battista Barberini

Via Pomponazzo 23, Vicolo Carmine 1–5,  
Vicolo Stretto 2–4, Vicolo Corridore

Benedetto Sordi, marquis, court dignitary and treasurer of the Order of the Most Precious Blood of Christ, instituted in 1608 by Pope Paul V and Vincenzo I Gonzaga, commissioned the Flemish architect Frans Geffels (1625–1694), superintendent of ducal building as from 1659, to redesign the family palace in 1680.

The baroque façade, extended to the entire block but on only two levels, adapted to the height of the neighbouring buildings, presents a horizontal sequence of paired windows and a vertical dynamic of the balustrades on the stringcourse. It is distinguished by rich decoration and the elevation of the central reception hall above the cornice. In the centre of the façade, the vertical composition of portal, marble balcony and door frame is crowned by a semicircular pediment with medallion. A cartouche with a bust of the Benedetto Sordi on the corner of the palace at the level of the first floor bears the name of the architect and the date of construction. While the shadowy entrance suggests a smaller courtyard, the space opens up scenically to mask its limited depth and present new vistas animated by statues, niches and the loggias of Neptune and the Telamones, horizontally underscored by the continuity of the balustrade.

The complementary and parallel painting by Frans Geffels and stuccowork by Giovanni Battista Barberini (1625–1691), whose expressive decorations in high relief

commenced as early as 1684, can be seen inside the palace on the main staircase, set in a single stairwell with free flights of steps and sculptural elements, and above all on the first floor in the Rooms of Ages and the Room of Belgrade, which commemorates the Christian victory of 1688 over the Ottoman forces at the gates of Vienna.

The palace, which presents numerous similarities with those of the Canossa and Valenti Gonzaga families, the latter designed by Geffels, is still private property and not open to visitors.

Marani, Perina 1965, pp. 213–215 and notes 36–39  
p. 234; Girondi, Sordi 2017.



## Church of San Martino

1680–1694; 1739

Frans Geffels

Via Pomponazzo, Via Filippo Corridoni 72



Dedicated to the sainted bishop of Tours and initially assigned to a prior appointed by the abbey of Polirone, the church is dated 1127 but has still earlier origins, with Romanesque remnants to be found inside the bell tower and the sacristy. Repeatedly rebuilt over the centuries and enlarged in the 16th century, it consisted in 1575 of a single chamber with four altars together with a refectory and a cloister that are now incorporated into the urban fabric. Its present appearance is the result of the work carried out from 1680 to 1694, including the demolition of previous structures and creation of a new sacristy and a house for the parish priest, by the Flemish architect Frans Geffels (1625–1694), superintendent of ducal building as from 1663, by request of the prior Francesco Simbeni.

Unusually restrained in comparison with other works by Geffels in Mantua, the façade presents a single giant order of four pilasters with composite capitals framing a central doorway, a rectangular window on either side, and three niches with large shells surmounted by pediments. The niches contain plaster statues subsequently installed (1739) by the prior Giuseppe Lancirotti: St Martin on horseback cutting his cloak to share it with the beggar in the centre, St Peter with the keys to the kingdom of heaven on the left, and St Paul with a sword on the right.

Geffels, who is buried in the church, preserved its aisleless layout, emphasized by a decorative frieze of stucco, and increased

the number of altars to six (plus the high altar). The stuccowork was executed under his supervision in 1686 by Giacomo Aliprandi and Michele Costa.

A tombstone of 1769 commemorates the prior Giovanni Antonio Maffei Modiani, who had the church renovated. Many of the numerous valuable paintings accumulated there over the years are from religious institutions suppressed during the Napoleonic period. Used as a storage depot in the 1930s and reconsecrated after World War II, San Martino is today part of the parish of Santa Maria della Carità.

Maria Giuseppina Sordi, "La chiesa di San Martino in Mantova," in *La Reggia*, year XV, no. 3 (57), September 2006 and no. 4 (58), December 2006; Girondi, Sordi 2017.





49.

## Palazzo Siliprandi

1710

unknown

Via Giovanni Arrivabene 2

The asymmetrically positioned entrance is a simple arched opening in the façade emphasized by the large aedicula with curved pediment and shell tympanum that frames the window on the first floor directly above it. The grilles on the ground floor, the cornice stringcourses with stuccowork and modillions, the first-floor windows with sills and an alternation of pointed and arched pediments, the baroque frames of the attic windows and even the shutters endow the façade with bold effects of light and shadow. The cornice on brackets that tops the first two storeys of the palace, dynamically arched in relation to the windows, is interrupted to leave space for the elevation of five bays of the façade with a further section with a broken pediment joined by consoles to the final level above. It remains uncertain whether this upper section was an addition or fruit of the inexhaustible inventiveness and imagination of the author of this façade, which displays continuity with the adjacent Palazzo Mortara. A photograph of 1956 by the Studio Calzolari shows the façade with the signs of the businesses then operating in the building: the Dugoni tailor's shop, the Galli printing works and a warehouse of plumbing equipment in the left side of the ground floor.

Ercolano Marani, "Vie e piazze di Mantova: via Arrivabene," in *Civiltà Mantovana*, no. 6, 1966, p. 56.





## Church of San Barnaba

1716–1737

Doricilio Moscatelli; Antonio Galli Bibiena (façade); Nicola Thévenin (dome)

Piazza Giuseppe Bazzani 1–2, Via Carlo Poma 1



The church, dedicated to St Barnabas, the first bishop of Milan, was built around 1263 and the adjoining friary some time later. Francesco I Gonzaga assigned the complex to the Servite order in 1397. Giulio Romano, whose house is nearby, died on 1 November 1546 after a short illness and was buried in the church.

A new church was built on the original Gothic edifice between 1716 and 1736 by the architect and engineer Doricilio Moscatelli (1660–1739), known as Battaglia, with the assistance of Giovanni Maria Borsotto from Ticino as director of works. The unusual longitudinal layout of the building, cadenced externally on the sides by a rhythmic pattern of twin buttresses and with a tall apse facing southeast, is due to the need to preserve the existing foundations uncovered during the work. The rebuilding was completed in 1737 with new façade designed by Antonio Galli Bibiena and featuring a classical portal in the centre with columns and triangular pediment, and a large window above with aedicula and curved pediment, both flanked by engaged columns of the Doric and Ionic orders with a pinnacle at the end on either side. It is probably during these operations that the tomb of Giulio Romano was desecrated and all trace of it disappeared.

The ogival dome was designed by the French master carpenter Nicola Thévenin and erected in 1760.

In 1797, with the Napoleonic decrees on the religious property, the friary was suppressed

and the building was used as a hospital. It later served as a home for members of the clergy before being demolished. Despite further encroachment to make way for the prison behind the church, part of the original cloister can still be seen.

The paintings that adorn the aisleless interior, with three chapels on either side and an apse with a very tall dome, include the *Way of the Cross* by Giuseppe Bazzani, *Salvator Mundi* by Teodoro Ghisi and the *Feeding of the Multitude* by Lorenzo Costa the Younger.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 224; notes 94–95 pp. 241–242; Marco Pinfari, Rodolfo Signorini, *La chiesa di San Barnaba in Mantova*, Editoriale Sometti, Mantova 2005.



## Palazzo Cavriani and Garden

1736–1756; 1826–1835

Alfonso Torreggiani;  
Giovanni Battista Vergani (garden)

Via Trento 16, 21, Vicolo Cappuccine 1,  
Via Alessandro Cavriani



Ferdinando Cavriani received the title of marquis for his services as a diplomat from the Gonzaga dynasty, which his family then outlived, becoming so powerful during the period of Austrian rule as to embark on the ambitious renovation of their 15th-century home in the district of San Leonardo. The marquis Antonio Cavriani commissioned the Bolognese architect Alfonso Torreggiani to renovate the building, which was to become one of the most imposing in the city. Laid out symmetrically, with the sole exception of the rounded southeast corner, around a central courtyard, it comprises 140 rooms on three floors and various mezzanines, a main staircase and a clock tower with a large terrace. The interiors, especially the huge ballroom, were decorated by the leading artists of the day, including Giuseppe Bazzani and Francesco Maria Raineri, known as Schivenoglia.

In 1826 the marquis Luigi Cavriani, leader of the city council, bought the Spolverini house located opposite and had it demolished to clear the space in front of the new building for a romantic garden designed by Giambattista Vergani with thirteen busts of local figures from the Renaissance and a marble statue of Virgil (1835) by the Milanese sculptor Stefano Gerola. The name of the street was then changed to Via Giardino.

The neighbouring Palazzo dell'Abate, a 15th-century building, bought by the Gonzaga family in the following century and

today a home for the elderly, was purchased in 1839 to house the family collections with a passageway built for access over Vicolo Cappuccine. The property spread further, incorporating Palazzo Biondi to the north in 1857 and finally the entire block, at the rear of which the Palazzina Cavriani was built with the stables.

The marquise Aliana Cavriani, the last descendant, sold the property in 1988, ushering in a period of abandonment, deterioration and repeated, severe damage. The building and garden have been auctioned a number of times since 2015.

Suitner, Nicolini 1987, p. 131 figs. 139–140; Marina Molon, "Quartiere San Leonardo e Piazza Virgiliana," in Bersani, Bogoni 2007, p. 89; pp. 91–93.





## Palazzo Mortara, then Palazzo ENEL

1750; 1914; 1951  
unknown

Via Giovanni Arrivabene 4

This two-storey, 18th-century building with an unusual oval-shaped inner courtyard was home to numerous Mantuan families before becoming the property of the Mortara family and then the offices of the electrical companies that merged to form the ENEL corporation.

The façade on Via Arrivabene follows its slightly convex course up to the eaves and presents panels that emphasize its vertical rhythm. The lower storey presents ashlar masonry, an arched entrance with two volutes in the centre and three windows on either side, and the upper tall windows with an alternation of triangular and arched pediments. In the courtyard, a series of pilasters cadences the large openings on the ground floor while the upper floor presents an alternation of twin columns embedded in an entablature of faux stone, fanciful balconies and bow windows with the Palladian motif. The monumental staircase has a wrought iron banister with the Mortara monogram.

Above the coat of arms in the cornice of a fountain in the wall of the courtyard, the date 1914 refers to the renovation by the Mortara family, to which the building owes its present form. A marble slab set in the same cornice presents a carved female face, the inscription *Rerum Renovata* and the date 1951, when subsequent refurbishment was carried out. Plans for the renovation of the building, which then housed the local offices of the Società Elettrica Bresciana, drawn up by the architect

Aldo Andreani in 1948 but never put into effect, envisaged covering the courtyard with a shallow dome to house counters serving the public. A drawing shows the large oval space bathed in light from a transparent ceiling with a curved frame resting on the existing pilasters.

The property is in a good state of preservation and was recently renovated by the Lubiam company.

*Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica*, 1988; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 26; RD (Roberto Dulio), "Progetto di riforma della sede della Società Elettrica Bresciana," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 230; p. 252.





## Palazzo degli Studi, now a high school, and the Biblioteca Teresiana

1753–1763; 1780

Alfonso Torreggiani; Paolo Pozzo

Via Roberto Ardigò 13–15, Via Pomponazzo 58,  
Via Dottrina Cristiana 6–10



The college founded by the Jesuits in their complex in 1584 was transformed into a university called the Pacifico Mantovano Ginnasio by Ferdinando Gonzaga in 1625. The southeast portion of the complex was enlarged by Nicolò Sebregondi in the 17th century to form the Collegio Nuovo and then redesigned as the Palazzo degli Studi with the acquisition of some adjacent buildings between 1753 and 1763 by the 80-year-old Bolognese architect Alfonso Torreggiani. The new two-storey building presented regular and austere arrays of windows with pediments in the lower section and shallow arches in the upper. Maria Theresa of Austria suppressed the Society of Jesus in 1773 and instituted the Regio Arciducale Ginnasio with laboratories for physics and chemistry as well as a library and an archaeological museum. A gallery of marble sculptures on the first floor provided access to the new library of the academy and the university. Built by the architect Paolo Pozzo in the former calefactory and fitted with two orders of wooden shelves with intermediate gallery designed by Antonio Colonna and Leandro Marconi, students of the academy, it opened on 30 March 1780. The adjoining hall for experimental physics was subsequently converted into a second reading room. The library also incorporated the gallery of marbles at the beginning of the 20th century. The tower in the middle of the building, which is laid out around three courtyards, was a meteorological observatory

active from the 18th to the 20th century. The building was used as a military hospital during the second war of independence and the students were transferred to the Academy building until 1861. The philosopher Roberto Ardigò studied and then taught in the college, renamed the Liceo Ginnasio Virgilio by Vittorio Emanuele II in 1867. The building was restored by the city council in 1959 to house the high school that still occupies it (Liceo Classico e Linguistico Statale Virgilio).

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 222; note 79 p. 240; Ugo Bazotti, Daniela Ferrari (eds.), *Il Palazzo degli Studi*, Publi Paolini Editori, Mantova 1991; Carpeggiani 1999, fig. pp. 122–123; p. 125; Jacometti 1999, pp. 182–183.



## Palazzo Bianchi, now Palazzo Vescovile

1756–1765; 1814  
unknown

Piazza Sordello 15, Via Fratelli Cairoli 19,  
Piazza Seminario

The wealthy cloth merchant Girolamo Bianchi bought a building on the corner of Piazza San Pietro in front of the cathedral in 1584. This was subsequently damaged and partially destroyed in connection with the sacking of Mantua in 1630. In the meantime, an adjoining building was inherited by the Porta family on the death of its owner, the last member of the Negri family, in 1582. Count Guido Porta had a house built on the site of these two buildings in 1722 and sold it in 1756 to the marquis Giuseppe Bianchi. Construction was completed in 1765 by an unknown architect and the inner courtyard was built in 1814. The imposing façade of eleven bays is divided horizontally by stringcourses into three sections, the lowest of which has a facing of smooth ashlar that also continues to the top of the outer bays and the three central ones. Bent beneath the weight of the balcony, the muscular telamones of the white marble portal “closely resemble the coeval ones of Palazzo Litta in Milan and those of the 17th-century Palazzo Davia-Bargellini in Bologna” (Ercolano Marani). The tall framed windows of the upper levels are crowned by alternately pointed and curved pediments. A balustrade surmounted by statues of classical divinities and the Bianchi coat of arms was added above the denticulated cornice in 1814. A baroque forked staircase adorned with statues leads to the first floor, which includes the large banqueting hall with tapestries of the Neoclassical period and rooms with ceilings frescoed by Giuseppe Bazzani.

Being in financial difficulties, the Marquis Alessandro Bianchi sold the palace to the diocese of Mantua in 1823 and the new bishop Giuseppe Maria Bozzi, appointed after the see had been vacant for fifteen years, moved in on 31 August together with the offices of the Curia. The diocesan archives were installed in the basement by bishop Antonio Poma in 1967.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 222; note 77 p. 239; Manfredo Tafuri, “I lavori nel palazzo Vescovile di Mantova, 1540,” in *Giulio Romano* 1989, p. 490.





## Teatro Scientifico

1767–1769; 1773–1775

Antonio Galli Bibiena;  
Paolo Pozzo (Maria Theresa room)

Via dell'Accademia 49, Via Pomponazzo 60



In the spring of 1767 Count Carlo Ottavio di Colloredo, director of the Accademia dei Timidi, received an offer from Antonio Galli Bibiena, first architect to the Habsburg emperor and stage designer, who had been working in the city on various projects for two years, to build the academy new theatre at his own expense within the year in exchange for free use of the same for twenty-five years. When his proposal was rejected as unrealistic and impossible, Galli Bibiena asked Karl Joseph von Firmian, the imperial plenipotentiary of Lombardy, to intercede. A contract was signed on 6 June on the terms agreed but an oversight in the plans and the need to adjust the wall on the courtyard in order to enlarge the theatre freed the academy from any obligation to share its use with the architect-entrepreneur, who finished the project in April 1768 with some work still to be done.

The theatre had a bell-shaped floor plan with undulating walls, a portico supporting a balcony, and three tiers of boxes above it. After the narrowing for the proscenium arch, with a double order of fluted Ionic columns, two tiers of loggias characterized by the Palladian motif alternating with aediculae continue all around the space for the musicians.

The theatre was inaugurated on 3 December 1769 and Mozart held a concert there at the age of 13 on 16 January 1770 during a tour with his father Leopold, who described it in a letter to his daughter Nannerl as the most beautiful he had ever seen. His wonder

arose from the comparatively non-theatrical character of the space, originally devoid of a stage and seating, where the public were free to walk around and chat. The name Teatro Scientifico in fact derives from its use for scientific experiments and conferences as well as art exhibitions.

The Neoclassical Maria Theresa room (or Directory room) in the foyer over the entrance, where the academy held its meetings, has stucco decorations designed by Giuseppe Bottani and executed by Stanislao Somazzi.

Ugo Bazzotti, *Il Teatro Scientifico dell'Accademia di Mantova e il concerto di Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart*, Il Rio Arte, Mantova 2015.



## Palazzo dell'Accademia Virgiliana

1773–1775

Giuseppe Piermarini

Via dell'Accademia 47, Piazza Dante Alighieri 1–1A,  
Via Roberto Ardigò 36

The Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Mantua's oldest and most illustrious cultural institution, dates back to 1562 and the founding of the Accademia degli Invaghiti, accommodated by Cesare Gonzaga di Guastalla in the medieval palace that occupies the present-day block. In 1643 the palace also housed the Accademia degli Invitti, founded in 1605 and renamed the Accademia dei Timidi in 1648. On 2 October 1752, in response to a proposal put forward by the architect Giovanni Cadioli, Maria Theresa of Austria instituted a royal academy of painting and sculpture, to which a “studio of geometry, architecture and perspective” — directed by Gaetano Crevola and Giovanni Giboni with Francesco Palma and Andrea Montessanti as assistants — was added in 1758. The Regia Accademia di Pittura e Scultura was thus organized into different disciplines, schools and classes like a university.

Instituted on 4 March 1768 by decree of the Empress and her son Joseph II, the Reale Accademia di Scienze, Belle Lettere ed Arti incorporated the academy of painting, sculpture and architecture, and the philharmonic academy founded by Leopoldo Micheli. It also included departments of agrarian sciences, surgery and arts and crafts. The following year Joseph II criticized the new Teatro Scientifico as over-decorated and urged the academy to adopt the Neoclassical ideals and update its teaching in this direction. In 1770 Crevola's place was taken by the

Roman Gian Battista Spampani, an expert on Vignola, who was succeeded almost immediately by Paolo Pozzo (1741–1803), a representative of the new approach. Between 1773 and 1775 Pozzo undertook the restructuring and enlargement of the palace to plans drawn up in 1770 by Giuseppe Piermarini (1734–1808), allowing himself some freedom of interpretation. When Mantua surrendered to Napoleon on 2 February 1797, General de Miollis, governor of the city and scholar of Virgil, named the institution the Accademia Virgiliana. Its activities were resumed in 1863 after reorganization by the prefect Antonio Guidi di Bagno.

Marani, Perina 1965, pp. 247–248;  
Carpeggiani 1999, pp. 115–116.





## Albergo Reale, now Palazzo Barbetta

1782–1785

Giovanni Battista Marconi

Via Cavour 13, Vicolo Albergo



The Austrian emperor Joseph II required the city to be provided with a luxury hotel for the International Fair to be held over May and June in Piazza Castello and Piazza Santa Barbara. To this end, the marquis Carlo Canossa bought the building occupied by the royal mint and incorporated it with the incomplete north wing of the family palace. Paolo Pozzo was already too busy to accept the commission, which was assigned to Giovanni Battista Marconi (1755–1825), his 27-year-old assistant at the academy. The front of the large rectangular block is characterized in the centre by an ashlar pseudo-portico with a giant order of four pilasters, Doric on the ground floor and Ionic on the first, and a balcony with a large window with an arch resting on a tall entablature with triglyphs and dripstones. In this façade with Renaissance overtones, the mezzanine constitutes an intermediate hiatus setting off the first-floor windows with their alternation of triangular and arched pediments. The crowning pediment, bearing the family coat of arms, rests on a cornice with an array of small circular windows. The rugged appearance of the façade is due to a thin coat of cocchiopesto plaster, against which the few structural details of white marble stand out.

A gigantic entrance hall with decorations by Francesco Tartaglini and a lowered ceiling leads to the vertical stairwell on the right, towards the coffee and billiard rooms. The staircases at the corners of the large

courtyard and the continuous balcony provided access to the rooms of the hotel. The ice house was on the left and the furnace on the right. The stables for horses and carriages were on Vicolo Fieno.

The inauguration took place on 6 May 1785 with a banquet for the forty contributors to the initiative, which cost a total of 129,000 lire. Bonifacio Canossa closed the hotel on 3 September 1821 and sold the building to the government for conversion into a courthouse for civil and criminal cases. The various subsequent owners include the family that gave it the name Palazzo Barbetta in the 20th century and Girolamo Landoni, the last, who converted it into a condominium with luxury apartments and offices in the period 1956–1957.

Marani, Perina 1965, pp. 257–258;  
Ballabeni, Bonora 1993–1994, pp. 57–61;  
Carpeggiani, 1999, p. 127 fig.; p. 128.



Palazzo D’Arco

1783–1784; 1872  
Antonio Colonna

Piazza Carlo D’Arco 4, 3A, Via Portazzolo



In 1783 Count Giovanni Battista Gherardo D'Arco commissioned the 30-year-old architect Antonio Colonna (1753–1799), one of the most gifted students of the academy, where the professors included his uncle Paolo Pozzo, to renovate the family home radically in the Neoclassical and Palladian style. The façade presents a giant order of pilasters, doubled in the outer bays, a lower storey of smooth ashlar masonry and an upper level of plaster. The three central bays present four semi-columns supporting a pediment with a two-headed eagle. The pseudo-portico includes the arched entrance, two smaller side entrances with panels above and a marble balcony resting on winged sphinxes. The section rising above the pediment with two circular windows corresponds to the main hall. Evidently drawing on the Palladian composition of Palazzo Valmarana, Colonna adapted this to the piazza in front by extending the façade to thirteen bays and reorganizing the interior vertically on two levels. The architect had some disagreements on financial matters with the Count, who became dean of the academy in 1786, and asked his uncle to intervene. Pozzo did so but was unable to prevent his nephew from being subsequently passed over for professional appointments in the city. Francesco Antonio D'Arco bought the properties to the rear in 1872 and a garden has ever since extended the vista beyond the scenic exedra designed by Colonna to two

15th-century buildings, one of which includes the Zodiac Room with a series of frescoes by Falconetto painted around 1515. The building was damaged in World War II and restoration began in 1946, when the stables to the left of the façade were occupied by the Accademia Teatrale Francesco Campogalliani, and continued until 1960. On the death in 1973 of the last surviving descendant, the marquise Giovanna Guidi di Bagno, the Palazzo D'Arco and its numerous collections became a public museum run by the D'Arco Foundation.

Marani, Perina, 1965, p. 257; notes 68–71 pp. 278–279; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, p. 31 fig. 13; Carpeggiani, 1999 pp. 128–130 and figs.





## Palazzo del Carmine or Palazzo della Dogana

1783–1788

Paolo Pozzo

Via Pomponazzo 25–31, Vicolo Dogana,  
Vicolo Carmine



The Carmelite friary, dating back to 1444, was confiscated in 1783 and converted to house the customs and excise offices. Erroneously attributed to Bertani, the work was carried out over five years by Paolo Pozzo, who redesigned the façades of various religious edifices converted to secular use during the period in the Neoclassical style, variously adapted to the 16th-century references of the context.

On this occasion, rusticated masonry with deep, regular openings was used for the lower section and alternating planes of ashlar for the upper with single and twin pilasters, and windows with pediments in rectangular recesses. The attic above the cornice in the central section is characterized by a close array of pilasters. Unusual and displaying a bold interplay of light and shadow, the façade as a whole is reminiscent in some way of the architecture of Giulio Romano.

The new façade includes two Renaissance portals of marble. One is the main entrance, at number 27, which Federico II Gonzaga commissioned Giulio Romano to design in 1583 for the old customs and excise building in Piazza dei Birri (later renamed Piazza Broletto), an arched entrance set in an aedicula with smooth Ionic columns and moulded entablature. The secondary entrance, at number 31, is instead the portal of the 15th-century church of Santa Maria del Carmine, previously part of the Carmelite complex, with slender fluted columns on low

bases, Corinthian capitals and entablature with ovolo moulding. Both lead to the original Renaissance cloisters with a double order of columns, where traces of frescoes still remain. What remains of the apse of the friary church, which contained the tomb of the Carmelite Baptista Spagnuoli Mantuanus, can still be seen in Vicolo Carmine.

Once occupied by the local revenue office, the building now houses the provincial headquarters of the forest rangers and offices of the Italian revenue agency.

Bellonci 1947, p. 261; Marani, Perina 1961, p. 209; Marani, Perina 1965, p. 255; note 48 pp. 275–276; Carpeggiani, Tellini Perina 1987, p. 161; Amedeo Belluzzi, "Il portale della Dogana a Mantova," in *Giulio Romano* 1989, pp. 488–489; Poltronieri 1989, no. 8; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 124 fig.; pp. 125–126; Adorni 2012, pp. 84–85.





## Forte di Pietole

1802–1814  
François de Chasseloup-Laubat;  
Giovanni Salimbeni;  
Nicolas Bonnaventure Perriolas  
1815–1866  
Heinrich Hentzy; Joseph Kussenitz  
von Ibenics; Johannes Rohn von Rohnau

Virgilio (MN), Località Andes, Viale Learco Guerra

Located in the vicinity of Virgil’s birthplace on a small hill called *Mons Virgilio*, the fort was part of the French army’s defences for the dam designed by de Chasseloup in 1802 to prevent Lake Paiolo from flooding. It consists of an asymmetric crown of fortifications over an area of 300,000 square metres with a parade ground in the middle. The outer covertway, permitting rifle fire all along the perimeter, is followed, proceeding inwards, by a dry ditch with a counterscarp gallery for direct fire on any attackers entering; two outer ravelins of brick with casemates for artillery and counterguards as well as a further rampart to the east facing the lake; a wide moat filled with water only in time of war; the bastioned front of the parade ground with curtain walls of 22 metres in width crossed perpendicularly in the centre by two exit routes. By virtue of the attention paid to the connections between the different levels, the fort offers a typical and well-preserved example of the defence works of the Mézières school and the designs of the French general François de Chasseloup-Laubat.

The area was marked out by the engineer Pietro Cremonesi in August 1802 and the work proceeded in phases until 1815, when the fort came into the possession of the Austrians, who continued it with other architects until 1863. A large powder magazine, an infantry barracks, a kitchen and 23 sheds to store equipment were added over the years.

Decommissioning began after the annexation of Mantua to the Kingdom of Italy in October

1866. In 1917, while it was being used as a munitions depot, the powder magazine and the casemates in the right side of the curtain wall exploded, leaving a deep crater that is still visible. Definitively decommissioned in the early 1990s, the fort is state property and currently the responsibility of the municipality of Borgo Virgilio. Guided visits can be arranged by request but the fort is now overgrown and in a poor state of preservation.

Francesco Rondelli, *Forte di Pietole, una macchina da guerra*, Publi Paolini Editore, Mantova 2013; Bonora 1999, pp. 222–223 figs.; p. 239 fig.; pp. 221–223; p. 241 note 25.





## Teatro Sociale

1818–1822

Luigi Canonica

Piazza Felice Cavallotti 14A–16,  
Piazza Teofilo Folengo 4–6, Corso Umberto I 2–12



In December 1816, when the Teatro Regio by Giuseppe Piermarini in the Palazzo Ducale had begun to prove inadequate, a company was set up to build a new theatre of appropriate size and importance for the city by Luigi Preti, secretary of the chamber of commerce. As happened in many other Italian cities, private citizens of the upper middle class thus shouldered the burden of construction and management. The first committee established the overall cost of the work as 209,000 lire on 11 January 1817. The Imperial Austrian government authorized construction with a dispatch on 22 October and work began in 1818. The site chosen was central with respect to the pattern of urban growth and at a distance from the district of the Austrian authorities. The Casone Gervasoni block and the irregularly shaped one behind it were combined and straightened out on the thoroughfare of the Pradella district. The commission was assigned to the Swiss architect Luigi Canonica (1762–1844), a pupil of Piermarini, who gave Neoclassical shape to a standard Italian opera house with a horseshoe-shaped auditorium and twenty-seven boxes in four tiers plus gallery. The carving and frescoes are the work of local artists including the painter Tranquillo Orsi, author of the decorations for La Fenice in Venice. The façade, two orders in height and characterized by a giant pronao with six Ionic columns and a triangular pediment, constitutes a sort of urban backdrop at the end of Corso

di Porta Pradella, the gateway to the old town. Inaugurated on 26 December 1822 after various hitches and controversies, the Teatro Sociale – named after its promoting company – is one of the finest public buildings of the Restoration period. It was included in the list of twenty-four theatres of the Italian tradition by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage under the terms of law 800 of 14 August 1967.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 260; Ballabeni, Bonora 1993–1994, pp. 715 ff.; Carpeggiani 1999, pp. 134–135 fig.; p. 137; Jacometti 1999, pp. 188–190 and figs.



## Palazzo del Seminario Vescovile

1824–1826; 1958

Giovanni Battista Vergani

Via Fratelli Cairoli 20, Via Carlo Montanari

A seminary was created in Mantua at the end of the 16th century and housed by the bishop Francesco Gonzaga on the ground floor of the medieval episcopal palace to the west of the cathedral. When the Curia obtained ownership of the Palazzo Marchesi Bianchi on the corner of Piazza Sordello in 1823 and made it the new episcopal palace, the seminary was able to expand and occupy the entire block.

The renovation, incorporating numerous earlier and archaeological elements, was the first work in Mantua of the architect Giovanni Battista Vergani, whose designs (1824–1825) are now in the Mantua state archives. The long Neoclassical façade, which reshaped the initial stretch of the road symbolically connecting Piazza Sordello and the new Piazza Virgiliana, presents smooth earthenware-coloured ashlar with arched windows on the lower storey and a plaster facing on the upper with windows surmounted by brackets with arched fanlights. Two pseudo-porticoes with pilasters and Ionic columns supporting an entablature and pediment mark the grafting of the perpendicular sections inside on the first floor. The construction of the façade involved demolition of the archway of the episcopal palace crossing the road. Behind the façade are two regular arcaded courtyards, one of which with a double order of trabeated porticoes with Doric columns.

In the post-war period the building housed an elementary and a middle school. The bishop Antonio Poma decided in 1958 to demolish

the 19th-century building, the surviving elements of which comprise the outer façade, the east cloister and the sections parallel to the same. The medieval church of San Paolo was demolished in the northern section of the block to build a new seminary. The restoration of the Neoclassical cloister and of the façade, to return to the original colouring, was completed in the spring of 2017.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 261; note 102 p. 282; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 140; Jacometti 1999, p. 188 and fig.





## Palazzo del Municipio

1829–1833

Giovanni Battista Vergani

Via Roma 39

The town hall building dates from the 16th century, when it was the residence of Emilia Cauzzi, illegitimate daughter of Duke Federico II Gonzaga and his mistress Isabella Boschetti, who married Carlo Gonzaga of the Bozzolo branch of the family in 1540. A decorative frieze beneath the coffered ceiling of the council chamber is attributed to Rinaldo Mantovano, the most talented pupil of Giulio Romano, and corresponds to a preparatory drawing by the master (now in Oxford) for the chamber of devices or heraldic emblems in Palazzo Te. The building was the property of the cadet Bozzolo branch of the Gonzaga family for a long time and the home of Scipione Gonzaga, Carlo's nephew, in the 17th century.

It was bought by the city council in 1819 and work began on renovation for use as the town hall. Between 1829 and 1833 the architect Giovanni Battista Vergani (1788–1865), who taught at the city's high school from 1819 to 1841 and organized a free school of architecture in his offices, worked on the façade and council chamber in the Neoclassical style. The new front of five bays on the street has an ashlar bottom storey with arches of white marble containing plastered areas and arched windows. Above a stringcourse decorated with a continuous Greek fret, the first floor presents an alternation of Ionic semi-columns and tall windows with balustrade parapet and pediment surmounted by coats of arms.

Vergani decided on the location of the bronze bust of Virgil by Giovanni Bellavite, which is part of a set including seven other busts of illustrious Mantuans commissioned in 1801 by General Miollis and produced in 1837 by the Milanese Stefano Gerola in bronze-patinated plaster.

Carpeggiani 1999, p. 138 fig.; pp. 139–140; Marani, Perina 1965, pp. 261–262; *Il Municipio di Mantova. Da residenza dei Gonzaga di Bozzolo a casa della città*, Il Rio editore, Mantova 2015.



## Former Palazzo Campagnola in Piazza Marconi

1849

Giovanni Cherubini

Piazza Guglielmo Marconi 27, Via Roma,  
Corso Umberto I

Located in the middle of the south side of the medieval crossroads known as the Purgo, now Piazza Marconi, this building of limited depth with a Neoclassical façade on four levels constitutes an urban landmark separating two major axes of the old city centre. The west side rests on the columns of the portico on Corso Umberto I.

In 1849, the new façade of Palazzo Campagnola was designed by the architect Giovanni Cherubini (1805–1882) from Brescia, a pupil of Rodolfo Vantini, who arrived in Mantua seven years earlier to take over from Giovanni Battista Vergani at the school of architecture.

Above the partially porticoed ashlar base of white stone and a mezzanine with a facing of plaster, the two upper storeys present regular, soberly framed windows and a large balcony supported by brackets, above which the three central bays present a pseudo-portico with pilasters and entablature with triglyphs surmounted by a classical pediment.

Cherubini is described by Ercolano Marani as “the last disciple of Neoclassicism” in a phase when Mantua was lapsing into provincialism.





**Lunettes of Frassino  
and Fossamana**

1859–1866  
Josef Ritter von Kussenitz;  
Gedeon Radó von Szent-Mártony;  
Joseph von Leard

Viale dei Caduti Località Frassino, Strada del Forte  
Località Fossamana



The two outworks were designed and built by the Austrian military engineering corps in 1859 and 1860 to strengthen the city's eastern defences in conjunction with the already existing San Giorgio lunette. The profiles of the embankments were altered as early as 1866 and the central reduit or stronghold was covered with earth on the sides exposed to the enemy. Albeit in simplified form, the architectural characteristics of these works, as documented by the drawings in the Vienna Kriegsarchiv, follow the standard plan of Austro-Prussian fortifications: polygonal layout on five sides opening onto the fortress, which is adapted to the morphology of the terrain in order to save on time and costs of construction; an initial palisade of wood three metres tall at the base of the earthwork; two caponiers of armoured masonry at the corners defending the ditch and one in the centre on the gorge controlling the open space. In the inner square, connected to the latter caponier by means of a stocked and protected courtyard, a T-shaped reduit with woodwork on one or two levels permitted rifle fire on all sides. The lie of the land at Frassino determined a rightward orientation of the fortification, armed with ten guns of various calibre and a howitzer, as against eight and a howitzer for the Fossamana lunette. The two lunettes were converted by the Italian government into munitions depots at the beginning of the 20th century and

finally decommissioned in the 1950s. In 1968 the local authorities in Frassino submitted a request to take over the area, now incorporated for some time into an urbanized context, and the disposal of explosives was carried out in 1979–1980. The area was transferred definitively to the town council in 2006 and the spaces outside the embankment were redeveloped as a public park the following year. The lunette itself is still abandoned and not accessible. The definitive decommissioning of the Fossamana lunette by the military in 1983 led to the present state of abandonment.



## Municipal slaughterhouse, now the Mediateca Baratta

1870–1872; 1980–1998

Giovanni Cherubini; Adolfo Poltronieri

Corso Garibaldi 88, Via Gradaro



The hospice and church dedicated to St Anthony built by order of Guido Gonzaga in 1368 served for four centuries as a refuge for orphans and pilgrims as well as patients discharged from the main hospital in the last stage of convalescence. The complex was suppressed in 1782 and converted by the Austrian government into an equipment depot and accommodation for troops. Having become part of the Kingdom of Italy in 1866, Mantua was in need of new public facilities. The municipality came into possession of the complex in 1870 and decided to demolish it completely and build a new municipal slaughterhouse to replace the Beccherie on the Rio canal. Built after the city gate of Porta Pradella (1848) and the façade of the Palazzo di Bagno (1857), the two-storey edifice is a late work by the architect Giovanni Cherubini (1805–1882) from Brescia displaying a more eclectic approach, as confirmed by the neo-Renaissance characteristics of the courtyard.

After long and complex restoration and renovation of the main body of the former slaughterhouse from 1980 to 1990 by the architect Adolfo Poltronieri, it now houses a cultural centre named after Gino Baratta (1932–84), a local literary and art critic, founder of the Gruppo di cultura moderna in 1956 and the magazine *Il Portico* in 1964, who was also associated with the left-wing Circolo Ottobre centre in 1972. Inaugurated on 18 December 1998 with an initial collection of

some 50,000 documents on the contemporary disciplines of the visual arts and sound art, the Mediateca Gino Baratta comprises the municipal library reading room, rooms for adolescents and children, and a newspaper library on the ground floor, and another reading room on the first floor together with a media library with individual workstations for the consultation and use of digital products. The structure also houses the municipal archives and the Istituto Mantovano di Storia Contemporanea.

Marani, Perina 1965, p. 264; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 141 fig.; p. 144; Jacometti 1999, p. 195.





**Factory of the Società  
Ceramica Mantovana**

1901–1960  
unknown

Via Cecil Grayson, Via Santa Marta,  
Vicolo San Nicolò, Vicolo Maestro, Via Gradaro

The Società Anonima Mantovana company was founded in 1901 with funding from the chamber of commerce and the Banca Mutua Popolare to create employment in the field of tile production. On 27 March it bought the factory of Forni Hoffman, active in the firing of clay from 1868 to 1874, and soon became the largest local company with a workforce of about 400. The complex consists of different structures built over the years: in the centre the original factory of solid brick with timber roof trusses; a three-storey addition of uncertain age to the east with a frame of reinforced concrete, walls of solid brick and pitched roof; another addition to the west, twice the width, made of brick with a vaulted roof on metal girders. The two additions each have a tall brick chimney. Some portions of linear buildings used for storage and the caretaker's lodgings still survive on the north edge of the area. The sheds with metal trusses to the south were built after the war to incorporate and expand the original drying rooms. During sixty years of transformations and exclusive use of the harbour of Porto Catena, connected by a short railway line, the entire industrial area of Fiera Catena underwent repeated changes in morphology and urban role. The factory, which had quadrupled its output, was requisitioned by the Fascist regime for wartime production in 1938 and slowly recovered afterwards. Production stopped definitively in 1960 and a period of

gradual deterioration and demolition began. A competition for redevelopment of the entire Fiera Catena area, held in 1984 and won by a group led by Emilio Battisti, led to nothing. After an alteration to the town planning scheme in 1989 earmarking the area for a new courthouse, a second competition was held and won by Luigi Pellegrin in 1998. The construction of the new north–south axis of Via Grayson in 2004 led to the demolition of part of the west section and two buildings south of the factory.

Pierre-Alain Croset, Mirko Zardini (eds.), "Concorso di prove. Progetti per l'area di Fiera Catena a Mantova," in *Casabella*, no. 493, July–August 1983, pp. 12–21; Giuseppe Gambirasio, Claudio Lamanna, *Progettare la città. Proposte di E. Battisti, R. Foresi, C. Lamanna, A. Pedrolli, A. Rossi, A. Rudi per la città di Mantova*, Marsilio, Venezia 1984; Romano Sarzi, *Porto Catena in Mantova*, Editoriale Sometti, Mantova 2005.



## Monumental Cemetery of Borgo Angeli

1904; 1915; 1919–1937

Ernesto Pirovano

Cimitero Monumentale di Borgo Angeli,  
Via Cremona 47



The competition for the cemetery ended in October 1904 with the decision of the city council in favour of the plans presented by Ernesto Pirovano (1866–1934), a prize-winner at the Milan Expo of 1906. A modernist architect breaking away from traditional Art Nouveau, Pirovano had already built the Castello Crespi in the industrial district of the same name in 1897 and embarked on the Bergamo cemetery project.

The bill of quantities for the central part was not submitted until 10 June 1915, having been requested only in January 1914. Variants were introduced with a view to a pragmatic construction process in phases but also regarding the architecture, including the two diagonal entrances on the corners of the main building and the choice of Ceppo di Gré or di Trezzo stone for the facings. The municipal council authorized the purchase of new land on 15 March 1919. In 1926, after the eastern section, work began on the four bays of the new façade to the west.

Requested to revise his plans in accordance with the new, more linear and economical approach of 20th-century architecture, Pirovano eliminated the turrets and lateral points of access, reluctantly reducing the design to the tall, compact façade of the central entrance with pilasters instead of columns and a pitched rather than flat roof. The decoration took the form of small X-shaped motifs on pilaster strips and capitals, panels with perforated patterns and stepped

cornices. The working plans for the new façade were completed on 12 March 1934 and Pirovano died the same year. The last two bays were built in 1937 after a halt in the work. The north gallery was built in 1953 and the western section was enlarged over the period 1972–1975.

The Monument to the Fallen in the Great War, the commission for which was assigned directly to Pirovano in 1928, was inaugurated in the presence of Prince Umberto on 28 September 1930. Located in the middle of the cemetery, the shrine of worked concrete rises to a height of 16 metres from a large terrace reached by a flight of steps on either side of the entrance to the crypt.

*Rassegna* 1988, p. 13; Giovanni Allegretti, "Dalla carta alla pietra. Le architetture del cimitero. Dalla 'Fronte Nova' alla 'Fronte Novissima'; L'Ossario - Monumento ai Caduti: un nuovo centro focale per il cimitero; Note biografiche e documentarie sugli artefici principali. Ernesto Pirovano," in *Ginex* 2000, pp. 37–46; pp. 46–50; pp. 192–193.





## Public housing complex on Via Nazario Sauro

1909–1912

Alberto Cristofori; Ulisse Malanca

Via Nazario Sauro 39, 41, 45, 49A, 51,  
Via Santissimi Martiri 1–3, Viale Risorgimento 59–61

A national law named after Luigi Luzzatti and passed on 31 May 1903 set up the Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari (IACP) to provide public housing for the less affluent. This was followed in 1920 by the founding of a branch for the municipality and province of Mantua through the efforts of Tito Azzini, a notary from Acquanegra sul Chiese, with the support of the local chamber of commerce, institutions and banks.

The public housing committee of technicians was joined in 1909 by the engineer Alberto Cristofori (1878–1966), whose first documented work was this pilot scheme for over sixty families, an alternative to the gutting of central urban areas and one of the first significant initiatives in Lombardy as regards public settlement and stylistic modernization of the economical, multi-storey housing block. In an area characterized by market gardens near the southern stretch of the city walls, three separate units were placed around a common internal space looking out onto a broad section of what was then Via San Pietro Martire. On northern and southern sides, parallel to the walls, the longer buildings are made up of three different sections depending on the size of the apartments, the last section being rotated to form the widening onto which the third building looks. This is set back from the road and houses common facilities in the centre. The staircases in the entrances, which serve from two to four apartments on each of the three floors, are located on the outer

side and the large windows on the landings cadence the façade on the main road, alternating with the recesses of the loggias and the solid expanses pierced by the vertical windows of the kitchenettes and the rooms. The fully occupied buildings still retain the Art Nouveau characteristics of the period despite their poor state of preservation.

Dario Lodi Rizzini, *Quella stagione quel quartiere...*, edizioni Bottazzi, Suzzara 1981; G. Mazzotti, "Le prime case popolari di città," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 22 February 1998; Jacometti 1999, p. 205 and fig.; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 75.



## Casa Schirolli

1910–1911

Aldo Andreani

Via Corrado 4–6, Ponte sul Rio Piazza San Francesco

The house was designed and built by the young Aldo Andreani, who completed its construction before graduating at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome on 28 December 1911. He was commissioned by Luigi Schirolli, the brother of Claudio, the owner of a long-established Mantuan furniture company responsible for furnishing the Chamber of Commerce in the same period. With a mixed structure of reinforced concrete and iron, the house is actually the combination of two buildings owned by the family, whose symmetrical duplication is visible at the front on the narrow Via Corrado, and an extension at the rear resting on two asymmetrical arches of masonry with foundations of reinforced concrete in the Rio canal.

It is precisely the view of this side from the bridge of San Francesco that characterizes the image of the house, the subject of numerous period postcards, as a modern reinterpretation of Mantua's urban landscape. A stringcourse divides the two lower storeys, which present a facing of exposed brick in alternating courses, and the top storey with its sgraffito plaster. The apparently accidental but balanced arrangement of the windows, the street-level balcony, the small Venetian loggia on the first floor and the use of brick, wood and wrought iron for architectural details simulate the layered effect of medieval building.

The interior spaces that most look forward to Andreani's subsequent architectural works are the large living room extending to the loggia

over the canal and the staircase of dark wood, a characteristic Andreani motif, designed as a sophisticated unique item and built by craftsmen of exceptional skill in a masonry stairwell beneath a skylight. Featured together with the Casa Nuvolari on Via Chiassi in the 1914 yearbook of the Associazione Artistica fra i Cultori di Architettura in Roma, the Casa Schirolli was restored in 2016 and currently operates as a bed & breakfast.

Dunkèrel (Clinio Cottafavi), "Casa Nuvolari," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 18 November 1912; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 13; fig. 34 p. 27; p. 80; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 42; fig. 10 p. 49; p. 193; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, pp. 71–72; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 4; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Casa Schirolli sul Rio," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 98–99; pp. 12–13; p. 25; p. 246.





## Palazzo Strozzi, now a branch of the Banca Agricola Mantovana

1910–1912

Giovanni Giachi

Corso Vittorio Emanuele 28–32

The site of the family home of Teofilo Folengo (15th century) was repeatedly bought and built on: by Francesco Secco da Caravaggio, a knight at the service of Federico Gonzaga, by the Marquis Francesco Torelli, whose building was destroyed by fire at the beginning of the 19th century, and by Pietro Tommasi, who bought the complex when it was auctioned by the Austrian state in 1826 to construct a building and an indoor riding school. The Florentine Strozzi family, resident in Mantua as from 1293, lived in Palazzo Valentini. The marquis Luigi bought the dilapidated building in 1863 and used the site, including adjacent properties inherited from the marquis Carlo, to construct a monumental palace with three wings of four storeys around a garden with a gate opening onto the street. This became the property of the Banca Mutua Popolare Cooperativa in 1872.

The building, now in a very poor state of preservation, was completely renovated for the bank in 1910 by the Milanese architect Giovanni Giachi, a pupil of Luca Beltrami and author in 1921 of the Rinascente department store. Giachi created a building representative of the city's financial bourgeoisie on what was then Corso di Porta Pradella, one of the first instances of the use of reinforced concrete in Mantua. The layout is based on the sequence of portico, atrium and entrance hall connected with a passageway between two atriums to the central room of counters serving the public, one storey high. The façade of

Botticino marble is instead emphatically in the 15th-century Venetian style: an ashlar base with a raised portico of three arches and an upper level characterized by an array of large mullioned windows, set closer together in the centre of the façade.

The Banca Agricola Mantovana, founded in 1870 and located on the opposite side of the street, took over the Banca Mutua Popolare Cooperativa in 1932 and moved its headquarters to the building on 10 April 1949. The building also has newspaper connections, having been occupied as from the spring of 1944 by the printing works of *La Voce di Mantova*, which became *Mantova libera*, an organ of the National Liberation Committee, on 19 April 1945, and was then renamed the *Gazzetta di Mantova* on 21 July.

"La nuova sede della Banca Mutua Popolare Cooperativa di Mantova. Arch. Giovanni Giachi," in *L'Edilizia Moderna*, December 1914, pp. 73–75; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 13; Carpeggiani 1999, p. 143 fig.; p. 144; p. 151 note 68; Jacometti 1999, p. 202; p. 204 fig.; Romani 1999, p. 307 fig.; Renzo Dall'Ara, "Palazzo Strozzi apre le sue porte: una visita alla storia della città," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 4 October 2014.



## Palazzo della Camera di Commercio, Borsa Merci and Loggia dei Mercanti

1910–1914

Aldo Andreani; Carlo Andreani  
(structural engineering)

Via Pietro Fortunato Calvi 28, Via Battista Spagnoli 1–3,  
Via Goito 19, Via Baldassarre Castiglioni 2–4



Aged twenty-four and still to graduate as an architect, Aldo Andreani (1887–1971) received the commission for one of the public buildings that mark the urban redevelopment of the early 20th century from Albano Usigli, president of the Chamber of Commerce and friend of his father Carlo, the municipal chief engineer from 1904 to 1913. Andreani began work in November 1910 and the definitive plans were submitted to the board of directors on 5 April 1911. A second version with a watercolour showing stylistic variants in the façade was presented in February 1912. The compact building occupies a small rectangular block (32 × 25 metres) with a solid perimetral structure. A skylight is located in the centre above a vertical stairwell with three cantilevered flights of reinforced concrete steps forming the main staircase. More than a quarter of the area of the two lower floors in the northwest corner is occupied by the loggia with its seven slender arches, above which the board room is located. A facing of Ceppo di Gré stone begins on the ground floor with a rich variety of stylistic inventions and continues in attenuated form on the brick facing of the upper floors to reappear in the massive brackets of the eaves. A whole variety of different references have been identified over the years in the literature and the free approach of the young architect striving to break free of Boito's teaching can be accurately described as eclectic. Carlo Andreani was the structural engineer

and served from September 1911 as director of works with a team of trusted craftsmen including the brothers Giuseppe and Vittorio Trainini from Brescia for the sgraffito plaster decorations and Umberto Bellotto from Venice for the wrought iron. Arrigo Andreani, the architect's brother, painted the two large frescoes on either side of the main staircase depicting the origins of commerce and navigation on the river. The costs rose from 235,000 lire to 322,000 and the building came into use on 1 October 1914 with no inauguration. Plans to enclose the loggia were drawn up by Andreani in 1947 but never put into effect.

"La nuova sede della Banca Mutua Popolare Cooperativa di Mantova. Arch. Giovanni Giachi," in *L'Edilizia Moderna*, December 1914, pp. 61–63; *Rassegna* 1988, pp. 12–31 and figs. 1, 4–32; p. 8; p. 10 fig. 13; p. 80; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, pp. 9–11 figs. 3–4; p. 15; p. 26; p. 36 fig. 10; pp. 38–39 fig. 11; pp. 58–61; pp. 70–78 figs. 1–18; pp. 172–173; p. 194; p. 215; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 74; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 3; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 5; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Palazzo della Camera di Commercio e Loggia dei Mercanti," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 102–109; pp. 12–13; p. 16; pp. 25–26 figs.; p. 27; p. 34; pp. 54–59 figs.; p. 80 fig.; p. 82; p. 252.





## Palazzo delle Poste

1911–1912

Osvaldo Armanni

Piazza Martiri di Belfiore 15

Originally planned for Piazza Sventramento in the area of the demolished ghetto, the construction of the Palazzo delle Poste on the north bank of the Rio canal entailed the clearance of many historical buildings and constituted the first act of the major urban redevelopment based on Piazza Martiri di Belfiore, the new centre of the business district.

Osvaldo Armanni (Perugia, 1855–1929), architect of the Rome synagogue in 1904 and master of Vincenzo Fasolo, produced various post office buildings in Italy during this period together with the engineer Vincenzo Costa. The east side of the compact, rectangular, three-storey edifice looks onto the piazza with a façade vertically divided into three sections: entrance portico with two pillars on the flight of steps at the bottom; loggia with balcony and central window between columns in the middle; and a row of windows with caryatids at the top. Above the bottom storey with its deep windows and a tall stringcourse, a giant order of pilasters with Ionic capitals, placed at the rounded corners and flanking the central section, joins the two upper storeys and cadences the array of windows. The rectangular windows of the first floor have pediments and the cornice has a close array of moulded brackets producing a chiaroscuro effect.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the continuation of demolition in the lower-class district of Bellalancia southwest of Piazza Martiri di

Belfiore. A long stretch of the Rio canal on the south side of the post office was covered to build the Corso della Libertà, an avenue with tall buildings and porticos on either side. The statue of St Sylvester on the San Silvestro bridge was moved there from the opposite side of the piazza right of the INPS building.

Jacometti 1999, pp. 202–203.



## Palazzo della Banca d'Italia

1911–1922

Gaetano Moretti; Luigi De Gaetani

Via Baldassarre Castiglioni 3–5, Via Bertani,  
Via Scuola Grande, Via Pietro Fortunato Calvi

The area of the former ghetto south of Via Bertani was redesigned after 1910 with an orthogonal arrangement of three small blocks each occupied by a single building. One of these, to the right of the Chamber of Commerce, is the building of the Mantua branch of the Bank of Italy, with an entrance on Via Baldassarre Castiglioni that forms a backdrop to Via Goito.

The building was designed by the Milanese architect Gaetano Moretti (1860–1938), appointed as first dean of the Politecnico di Milano Faculty of Architecture in 1933. An eclectic professional of international standing, Moretti is known as the architect of the Crespi d'Adda workers' village (1878–1920) and the nearby Tacconi hydroelectric plant at Trezzo d'Adda (1806). A champion of the “as it was, where it was” principle of restoration, albeit with the use of modern materials and techniques, he also played a leading part with Luca Beltrami in rebuilding the San Marco bell tower in Venice after its collapse in 1902. The Genovese engineer Luigi De Gaetani, his partner in this project, is the author of a better-known Bank of Italy building in Via Dante, Genoa, inaugurated in 1916. Construction of the compact rectangular building with a stone facing, pilasters on the corners and on the entrance facing Via Goito, characterized by a projecting portal on Ionic columns and upper loggia with three arches, commenced in May 1914. The horizontal ashlar masonry of the bottom storey is

followed by a mezzanine with low windows and a streamlined upper storey with tall windows and minimally projecting balconies. The Bank of Italy put the building on the market in good state of preservation in 2009 and it was bought by the local firm Finservice Spa in October 2016.





## Casa Nuvolari

1912

Aldo Andreani

Via Giovanni Chiassi 71

Two adjoining houses of rented accommodation purchased the previous year by Ferruccio Nuvolari were combined in 1912 to form a new home for his son Camillo after his marriage to Ada Fochessati in February. The architect, Aldo Andreani, was a contemporary of the couple and nephew of the best man, the lawyer Giorgio Risi. Masonry, iron, reinforced concrete and wood were used to renovate and merge the two buildings behind a two-storey façade that realigns the vertical levels, recalls the previous condition in its slight deviation from the line of the street, and provides access to the rear courtyard through an asymmetrically positioned entrance.

The façade develops variations on the theme of the typical 15th-century Mantuan house. Above a socle of Ceppo di Grè stone pierced at the bottom by pairs of square openings, the lower storey has a brick facing of alternating horizontal courses with brickwork around the windows and a projecting cornice, while the upper presents sgraffito plaster with brick inserts and markedly projecting wooden eaves. The accents of the composition are the Ceppo di Grè entrance surmounted by a balcony of Biancone di Verona marble and the vertical repetition of the two larger windows on the right joined by a spur-like element that rises up to a slender column of green serpentine. The rich array of wrought-iron elements, including grilles on the lower windows, supports for electricity cables and banister for

the internal staircase with naturalistic motifs, is the work of Umberto Bellotto in Venice. The stairwell to the right of the entrance displays sgraffito decoration crowned by a row of paintings of episodes in Mantua's history by Arrigo Andreani, Aldo's brother. After losing her husband, Ada Fochessati retained ownership of the house until 1926, when she married the writer Riccardo Bacchelli and moved to Milan.

Dunkèrel (Clinio Cottafavi), "Casa Nuvolari," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 18 November 1912; *Rassegna* 1988, p. 10 figs. 14–15; p. 17; p. 24; p. 29; figs. 38–40; p. 80; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, pp. 42–43; figs. 7–9 p. 48; p. 171; pp. 194–195; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, pp. 72–74; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 5; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 7; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Casa Nuvolari," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 112–113; pp. 12–13; p. 25; pp. 60–61 figs.



## The Sordi Mausoleum in Frassino

1912–1913

Aldo Andreani

Frassino cemetery, Strada Cimiterio 1

The Sordi family mausoleum, designed by the architect Aldo Andreani, still stands out by virtue of its disproportionately large scale to the left of the present entrance to the cemetery of Frassino. The motif of the Greek cross dominating the main façade on the northeast side presents arms of different lengths in white stone extending from a large round window of framed glass. Due to a reduction during construction of the area that should have been covered with white statuary marble, the mausoleum presents itself as a heavy brick building with pointed inserts of rough-hewn grey stone, which almost appears in the upper section to break off the constraint of the facing, thus causing distortions also in terms of layout. The weight of the masonry mass is also belied by the apparently precarious way in rests on the ground.

The suggestion of transition to a different dimension conveyed by the recessed space of the main entrance with its naturalistic profile was taken up again by Andreani in 1925 in his design for access to the Palazzo delle Corporazioni Sindacali Fasciste in Mantua. The small door of dark wood in an intricate pattern provides access to the chapel, entirely covered in sgraffito decoration, for which the architect designed the furnishings. The interior is on two levels, both accessible from the outside but connected internally by an unadorned stairway of reinforced concrete and iron. On the left side of the mausoleum, a large

family coat of arms in stone rests on the ground in a small garden at the top of a steep ramp leading down to the underground burial chamber beneath an asymmetric pattern of grilled windows. On the opposite northwest side, the expressionist brickwork suggests the image of a cross in a setting sun.

*Rassegna* 1988, p. 7 fig. 2; p. 24; p. 30 fig. 41; p. 80 and figs. 2–3; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 9 fig. 2; pp. 66–67; p. 82 figs. 26–29; p. 195; Giovanni Allegretti, "Dalla carta alla pietra. Le architetture del cimitero. L'edicola Sordi al cimitero di Frassino," in *Ginex* 2000, pp. 63–66; fig. p. 64; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, n. 8; NT (Nicolò Tasselli), "Mausoleo Sordi," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 114–115; p. 12 fig.; pp. 64–65 figs.





## Valentini Chapel

1912–1914

Alberto Cristofori

Cimitero Monumentale di Borgo Angeli,  
Via Cremona 47, Campo centrale B no. 1

The plans, drawn up by the engineer Alberto Cristofori, were presented in 1912 together with a plaster model produced by the Martinenghi firm in Mantua. As indicated in the inscription on the exterior, the building was completed in 1914.

The family's importance is reflected by the location of the chapel, west of the central field in a symmetrical position opposite a Valentini monument, and by its height of eleven metres, dominating the cemetery. The Art Nouveau style, recognizable in the juxtaposition of materials like stone, wrought iron, bronze and glass, is mixed with overtones of the Middle East and develops the symbolism of burial in abstract and geometric forms.

The exterior balances the tension between the vertical thrust and the surrounding space. It develops above the sequence of four moulded bases with a truncated pyramid with a facing of grey Torbole marble. The narrow vertical openings in the Secessionist style lead up to a small carved cross overlapping with the uppermost cyma with its carved foliage decoration. The stepped roof is crowned with a complex iron cross. At the same time, the canopies set halfway up the wall on all sides, resting on large denticulate brackets, project the construction horizontally into the surrounding space with a centrifugal movement.

At the top of four bronze steps, two gates of wrought iron by Remigio Pettoirelli interrupt the base and provide access to

the contemplative atmosphere of an interior characterized by the richly varied colours of the different marbles employed (Verde di Acceglio, Verde Alpi, Bardiglio Nuvolato), the light filtered through polychromatic windows and a decorated false ceiling.

The chapel holds the remains of the Mantuan painter Domenico Pesenti (1843–1918), a pupil of Camillo Boito at the Brera academy, who enjoyed the family's patronage.

Giovanni Allegretti, "Dalla carta alla pietra. Le architetture del cimitero. L'opera di Alberto Cristofori nel cimitero monumentale," in *Ginex* 2000, pp. 59–60; fig. 102 p. 81; p. 126; p. 184; p. 222; p. 228.



## Rocca Chapel

1913

Alberto Cristofori

Cimitero Monumentale di Borgo Angeli,  
Via Cremona 47, Campo centrale A no. 1

The family chapel holds the remains of the lawyer and politician Fermo Rocca, closely associated with the Garibaldian Alberto Mario (editor of *La Provincia di Mantova* in 1880 and *Lega della democrazia* from 1880 to 1893) in the period 1893–1895 and elected to parliament as a candidate of the Radical Socialist party in 1889. A bust of Rocca by the sculptor Carlo Cerati can be seen in the town hall.

The late Art Nouveau style adopted by the engineer Alberto Cristofori retains characteristics like the juxtaposition of concrete and iron, the chiaroscuro effects of superimposing and grafting elements, and floral inscriptions. Unlike the contemporary Valentini Chapel, however, it presents itself as an isolated, monolithic, barbarian burial chamber, the central section of which displays careful, detailed carving.

The outer parts of the base, widened and crossed by the flight of steps, and the termination, heavy and rough-hewn in the profile of its end section, are darker with a rugged finish. The central part is instead more refined with its lighter colour and the chiaroscuro effect of its geometric decorations – ovolo mouldings at the base, dentils on the entablature and compositions of crosses and Christian monograms at the edges – which also involve the wrought iron gate. This constitutes the threshold of a more colourful, dreamlike interior with a mosaic floor and a sgraffito frieze on white plaster. The

architect's instructions were to use reinforced concrete together with an exposed cement conglomerate of varying texture to simulate the rugged surface of rough-hewn stone. The plans of the tomb, the list of materials to be used and the design of the wrought-iron gate with geometric motifs are in the municipal archives.

"L'edicola Rocca di A. Cristofori a Mantova," in *L'Edilizia Moderna*, year XXII, fasc. 3, March 1915, p. 24; Giovanni Allegretti, "Dalla carta alla pietra. Le architetture del cimitero. L'opera di Alberto Cristofori nel cimitero monumentale," in *Ginex* 2000, pp. 58–59; fig. 82 p. 80; p. 186; p. 216; p. 227.





## Casa Zanardi

1913

Alberto Cristofori

Via Cavour 70–74, Via Sant'Agnese 2–6

Built by the engineer Alberto Cristofori on a corner in an eclectic style with Renaissance overtones to project the urban image of a middle-class family, the house incorporates remains of the left side of the portico in front of the church of Sant'Agnese, demolished in 1806.

Here too Cristofori displays compositional skill and a knowledge of materials and techniques characteristic of the early 20th century, as exemplified by the details in ceramics and iron, and the expanses of sgraffito plaster or tooled concrete.

Broad arches on solid piers impart a relaxed rhythm to the ground floor, occupied by commercial premises. Above a tall strip of sgraffito decoration, the two upper residential floors present windows with wooden frames outlined in terracotta on plaster decorated with geometric patterns. The entrance is to the left of the three bays on Via Cavour, emphasized on the first floor by balconies and a double window in the centre. The doubling of the balcony at the beginning of the six bays on Via Sant'Agnese emphasizes the urban importance of the corner location together with the eaves of dark wood, which project upwards and also involve the upper frames of the windows on the top floor.

Antonio Carlo Dall'Acqua mentioned this new addition to the urban panorama in an article on the architecture of Aldo Andreani (*Corriere di Mantova*, 3 October 1914): "I am delighted to recall with praise the recent building on Via

Cavour, whose graceful lines and tastefully coloured decoration strike a note of gaiety standing out all the more beside the funereal frontage and the huge, ungainly brackets of the balcony of Palazzo Bonoris. The façade is the work of another talented young man, the engineer Alberto Cristofori."

Antonio Carlo Dall'Acqua, *Corriere di Mantova*, 3 October 1914; "Casa Zanardi in Mantova. Ing. Alberto Cristofori," in *Edilizia Moderna*, XXIV, 1915, fasc. I, pp. 5–6, tab. IV–V; Federico Acuto, "Temi e luoghi della critica," in *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 172; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 75.



## Building of the Istituto Pro-Lattanti Ernesto Soncini

1919–1925

Alberto Cristofori; Luigi Fossati

Viale Risorgimento 43, Via Giuseppina Rippa



Founded in 1905 by the paediatrician and philanthropist Ernesto Soncini, author of the first model handbook on childcare (*Memoriale del neonato*, 1908), the Istituto Pro-Lattanti e Slattati was an avant-garde home for abandoned illegitimate children and unmarried mothers at the beginning of the century. In March 1921 the decision was taken to move from the original premises on Via Fratelli Bandiera and the former Austrian powder magazine of Sant'Anna was purchased. The Mantuan engineer Alberto Cristofori (1878–1966) worked on the project for its renovation and enlargement from 1919 to 1921 together with the architect Luigi Fossati.

Restructured with the addition of a section on the street, the building covers an area of 2,000 square metres and is characterized by an unusual eclectic approach as regards materials and style, combining medieval, Romanesque and Byzantine elements with Art Nouveau. The surfaces between the rough-hewn blocks of stone in the lower section and wooden brackets with a dart motif of the eaves display both sgraffito plaster and exposed brickwork in different bonds to create chiaroscuro effects, especially in the parapets of the balconies and the cornices of arches and windows.

The new building, equipped with advanced, functional interiors in accordance with the rigid health regulations, was inaugurated on 24 June 1923 and completed at the expense of the provincial authorities on 11 November 1925.

The Institute, run by the Sisters of Charity of St Vincent De Paul since 1926, was evacuated during World War II but then resumed its activity as a home for abandoned children and unmarried mothers. It became a municipal day care centre in 1978 and subsequently housed the local health service laboratories and department of hygiene and preventive medicine. Now owned and occupied by the regional agency for protection of the environment, the building is currently on the market due to the obvious difficulties of maintaining such a valuable but complex architectural work.

Ginex 2000, pp. 189–190; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, pp. 75–77; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 6; Roberto Bo, "L'Arpa trasloca e vende la vecchia sede," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 11 August 2012, p. 13.





## Ponte Arlotto Drainage Plant at Porto Catena

1924–1929

Pietro Ploner

Via Fondamenta, Via Trieste



The old Porto degli Scolì on Lake Inferiore, terminal of all the city's sewers at the end of the 12th century, became a commercial harbour in 1353, when it was equipped with a huge iron chain and floating beam to prevent access by night. The present-day Porto Catena, connected to the Ceramica Mantovana factory by a short railway line in 1886, was larger and busier in the past. The Ponte Arlotto drainage plant at the mouth of the Rio canal in the harbour served to control its level and prevent it from rising with the level of the lakes. The previous structure, constructed in 1879, was a bridge with three massive arches resting on low piers over the Rio. The upper part consisted of five bays of brick marked out by pilasters and arched windows. The bays at either end projected slightly on both sides.

The old structure was demolished in 1924 and the commission for a new one was awarded to the engineer Pietro Ploner (1888–1951), the author of two similar plants in Valletta Valsecchi (1929) and Forte Pietole as well as the more complex Travata plant at Bagnolo San Vito (1922).

Ploner superimposed a more modern and industrial image onto the previous structure. The building was coated with plaster and the windows were larger and rectangular with an array of small square panes in thin frames. The height of the bays at either end was also increased with the addition of an upper row of windows. The pump room was flooded with

light from twin windows in the three central bays. The initial section of the lower level was also fitted with windows. The image on the harbour was more technological, with huge pipes emerging from closed bulkheads under surveillance from a gallery.

The structure, now owned by the Consorzio di Bonifica Territori del Mincio (formerly the Consorzio di Bonifica Sud Ovest di Mantova), underwent restoration in 2016.



## Cattle market complex, now Bocciofila Mantovana

1925–1926  
Aldo Badalotti

Viale Te 25

The area east of the exedra of Palazzo Te was used in the early 20th century to show cattle during the trade fair in the stretch between the Vialone delle Aquile in the north and the railway to the south. This use of the area, known as the Praterie del Te, necessitated the building of a permanent structure.

The plans for the cattle market, dated 7 February 1925 and drawn up by the engineer Aldo Badalotti, head of the municipal technical department, envisaged two buildings running parallel to the railway with twenty-two common stalls, two larger stalls for the garage and four warehouses. The director's office was in a smaller building closer to the exedra of Palazzo Te.

Located in the centre in line with the lesser axis of the Te race course, the complex comprised a large central hall for buying and selling, and three white marble steps leading up to large terrace front of the building offering a view of the entire market. The rooms located around the central hall were occupied by a café and restaurant, a bank, a post office, a veterinary surgery, the management and various administrative offices. The spaces were paved with hexagonal stoneware tiles. The caretaker's lodging, with one room on the ground floor and two on the first, was in the rear of the building. The plastered façade presents decorative marble-chip tiling. The open space in front of the buildings, enclosed by walls and wire fencing, was rationally divided into stalls with marble posts,

iron railings, kerbs and gutters for the disposal of animal excrement.

The cattle market was moved after World War II and the stalls were demolished in 1962. The central pavilion still survives and is occupied by the Società Bocciofila Mantovana. New structures were added to it in the 1980s.





## Palazzo dell'Agricoltura, now building of the Banca Popolare di Mantova

1926–1928

Carlo Finzi

Piazza Martiri di Belfiore 7, Corso Prince Amedeo,  
Via Matteotti

A new Palazzo delle Corporazioni Sindacali Fasciste was planned for the site of the San Domenico friary, demolished in 1925 and transformed into the Landucci barracks, after the construction of the new Via Crispi (now Via Matteotti) in accordance with the provisions for the old city centre contained in the urban planning scheme of 1921–1927 drawn up by the engineer Aldo Badalotti, head of the municipal technical department. Aldo Andreani made a series of splendid drawings (with the motto *Pulsate*) in 1924–1925 for a building in the Roman Renaissance style with an entrance in the ashlar socle leading into a large antechamber on the lower ground floor followed by a room with a vaulted ceiling. As a critic writes, “access becomes a spatial event transposed internally” (M. Lupano, in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 142). No public competition was held and the work was assigned directly to the engineer Carlo Finzi, who placed the entrance, a three-part portico with Corinthian columns surmounted by a plaque, on the street bisecting the area, facing the Palazzo delle Poste. The rounded corner of the building is marked up to the eaves by double orders of Corinthian columns and framed by pilasters, which continue at intervals along the two long sides until the reduction in height to three levels. Weighed down by travertine stone, wrought iron and vertical window frames creating chiaroscuro effects, the façades are cadenced horizontally by the mezzanine floor with its square

windows. The central hall inside is located beneath a large octagonal skylight. With the addition of a storey in 1939–1940, it housed the offices of the Confederazione Fascista degli Agricoltori and became commonly known as the Palazzo dell'Agricoltura. Under the ownership of Federconsorzi, it underwent further modifications in 1962 and housed the Consorzio Agrario Provinciale until 2000. After long restoration, it has been occupied by the Banca Popolare di Mantova since 2011.

*Rassegna*, 1988, p. 83; pp. 85–86 fig. 12; *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica*, 1988, p. 20; p. 34; p. 117; pp. 124–125 figs. 1–5; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 14; ML (Mario Lupano), “Progetto del Palazzo dei Sindacati,” in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, pp. 142–145; p. 11 fig.; pp. 13–14 figs.; p. 15.



## Building for shops and offices of the Banca Agricola Mantovana

1927–1928

Alberto Cristofori

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 3–11

Founded in 1870 with its headquarters in the Palazzo del Diavolo at number 13 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, the Banca Agricola Mantovana bought some adjacent buildings on the same street in the vicinity of the Teatro Sociale in the late 1920s and commissioned the engineer Alberto Cristofori to design new commercial premises, which are still in an excellent state of preservation today. The five-storey building runs to the end of the thoroughfare, forming a rounded corner – a common feature of triangular blocks in the fabric of the middle-class districts – with the intersection of the Rio canal and continuing towards the front of the theatre. Above the basement section looking onto the canal, the building is characterized by commercial premises on two levels. The mezzanine, with Diocletian windows in the straight section and oculi in the rounded part, was designed to support the projecting linear element of a continuous balcony, which emphasizes the curvature of the building. Above this base are two levels of offices with continuous rows of ashlar masonry and large framed windows. The composition is crowned by the strip of a mezzanine with an alternation of small square windows and decorated panels. The owner's name and the year of completion appear on the façade in a large sgraffito inscription beneath the eaves.

Morselli 1989-1990; Jacometti 1999, pp. 202-203; p. 204 fig.





## Danilo Martelli Stadium and Learco Guerra Velodrome

1930–1937; 1947–1949

Aldo Badalotti

Viale Te 7–9, Viale Isonzo

During the 1920s the area of Porta Ceresè was home to the Velodromo del Te with its wooden stands and track of beaten earth. The project for a new stadium named after Benito Mussolini — an initiative launched by the Mantua soccer association, the city council and the federal secretary of the Fascist party with funding to the tune of 467,000 lire — was assigned in 1930 to Aldo Badalotti, chief engineer of the municipal technical department. Plans for the Mussolini sports complex were also drawn up by Aldo Andreani in 1933. The concrete cycling track was inaugurated in 1936 and the stadium was completed in 1937. The structure had been dedicated the previous year to Settimo Leoni, an 18-year-old Fascist killed in Via Magistrello in 1921. A German army lorry crashed into the outer wall during the war, as did an American Dodge in April 1945. On 28 July Lieutenant Alvin Pratt, commander of the 37th General Hospital, requested that the stadium be renamed after John R. Nation, an American soldier killed in Mantua. Work began in 1947 on rebuilding the stadium with a seating capacity of 15,000, structure of reinforced concrete and brick curtain walls. The side on Viale Te is characterized by a canopy roof and a series of load-bearing walls, and the opposite side by the curve of the tiered seating. In 1949 was dedicated to Danilo Martelli from Mantua, a member of the great Torino soccer team who died in the Superga air disaster.

A plaque at the north entrance recalls that the concrete track was named on 2 June 1963 after the “human locomotive” Learco Guerra, deceased a few months earlier, who became the first ever to wear the pink jersey on winning the Milan-Mantua stage of the Giro d'Italia on Viale del Te on 10 May 1931. The roof of the south stand was seriously damaged by a tornado on the night of 20 July 1977 and 9 July 2005 saw the start of work to demolish the home straight on the south side and the Te bend of the concrete track in order to increase the capacity of the soccer stadium with a new stand on a metal frame.

*Rassegna* 1988, p. 84; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 16; Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 250 and fig.; Dall'Ara 2017.



## Annex of the Istituto Pro-Lattanti, now ARCI Salardi

1931–1935

Alberto Cristofori; Luigi Fossati

Viale Risorgimento, Via Vittorino da Feltre 79–81

The Istituto Pro-Lattanti e Slattati was enlarged ten years later in two phases, again by the engineer Alberto Cristofori and the architect Luigi Fossati. A recognizable change in style is already evident in the first new construction on Viale Risorgimento, dated 19 December 1931 and connected to the original premises with a closed portico.

The plan, dated 15 September 1933 and described in a document in the municipal archives, was for two one-storey buildings laid out along the adjacent streets and connected on the corner by the entrance, a curved, transparent veranda protected by a thin canopy of reinforced concrete with marked horizontal projection. These buildings were then to support tall upper storeys with constructions perpendicular to the streets. This was carried out only on Viale Risorgimento, where the upper structure, surrounded by usable terrace roofs, was built during a second phase in 1935.

The rigorous modernism of the unadorned buildings is emphasized by the facing of exposed brick in regular courses into which the windows are inserted, with concrete cornices on the lower level and slightly splayed lintels of exposed brickwork on the upper.

The new building was again equipped with the latest healthcare facilities and technical innovations. Occupied since 1995 by one of the oldest and most politically active ARCI centres, founded in 1946, originally based

in Palazzo Sebastiano and named after the partisan Ermanno Salardi, the municipally-owned building has been on the market since 2013.

Gabutti, Bonora 2002, pp. 77–78; figs. 19–21 p. 76;  
*Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 6.





## Casa del Balilla

1932–1933

Costantino Costantini

Via Solferino 30, Via Ivanoe Bonomi

After initial plans drawn up by the municipal employee Bruno Marani in 1928, the demolition of a medieval building converted into a civilian hospital and the construction of Via Bonomi, the Casa dell'Opera Nazionale Balilla (Fascist Youth centre) was built to plans produced in 1932 by the engineer Costantino Costantini (1904–82), the author of a similar project in Turin.

The geometric building on two floors plus basement was laid out in a C shape around a courtyard and cadenced vertically by a three-storey tower. The section on the street housed the two separate entrances, the lounges, the instructors' room and the fencing room on the ground floor, with halls and lounges for "young Italian females" on the first. The north wing housed the infirmary and the refectory and kitchen on the ground floor and the administrative offices on the first, while the south wing was occupied by a double-height, semicircular gymnasium in direct contact with the courtyard together with dressing rooms, showers and storage space. The tower housed the offices of the director and the doctor on the second floor and the caretaker's quarters on the third. The floor at the foot of the stairs in the entrance is a four-colour mosaic of white, red, black and yellow.

An example of the standard Fascist youth centre before the formal regression connected with the introduction of measures for economic self-sufficiency in 1935, the Mantua Casa del Balilla was inaugurated by Renato

Ricci, president of the Opera Nazionale Balilla, on 24 September 1933. Aldo Andreani drew up plans for a multi-platform bus station in the same area in 1941.

After the war, with its appearance impaired, the complex was converted in 1952 to house the Giulio Romano junior high school and underwent modifications in 1975, above all to the external entrances and the southwest corner. It served as an annex of the Istituto professionale superiore femminile Mazzolari from 1987 to 2008. After a proposal for a youth hostel, it became the property of Mantua University in 2011 and there are plans for conversion into a student hall of residence.

*Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988; Rumi, *Mezzanotte*, Cova 1999, p. 87 fig.; *Modernità dell'Architettura* 2003, no. 9; Rinaldo Capomolla, Marco Mulazzani, Rosalia Vittorini, *Casa del Balilla. Architettura e fascismo*, Mondadori-Electa, Milano 2008, p. 23; fig. p. 24; pp. 64 ff.; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 22; RD (Roberto Dulio), "Progetto della stazione delle autolinee," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 225.



## Casa di Tazio Nuvolari

1932–1934  
Sante Pecchini

Via delle Rimembranze 1A, 1B, 1C

Designed by the engineer Sante Pecchini and built in 1933–34 by the Gino Bozzi firm for the engineer Aldo Badalotti, head of the municipal technical department, the house was bought in 1935 by the racing driver Tazio Nuvolari (1892–1953), who had decided to settle definitively in his hometown with his wife Carolina Perina and their two children, his father Arturo, mother Elisa and sister Artura. Now famous, Nuvolari had just triumphed in July over the 174 bends of the Germany Grand Prix in his Alfa Romeo P3, humbling the arrogant pride of Nazism, and the house echoed his victory in the saffron yellow of the plaster, the colour of his jersey, and the outer wall, modelled on the pits of the *Nürburgring*. Equipping the house with every comfort, he had a garage-workshop built in 1935 on the east side of the grounds. The caretaker's lodge was built on the street in 1939 and fourteen trees were planted in the garden. Despite the symmetrical arrangement on two floors, crowned by a non-projecting cornice, the upper storey seeks to establish diagonal relations with the small garden to the east and west with corner windows and part of the front rotated so that windows and small terraces face opposite directions.

The house, which Nuvolari appears to have referred to affectionately in dialect as “*me casoto*,” was also the scene of family tragedies, the place where his sons Giorgio and Alberto died respectively of myocarditis on 27 June 1937 and nephritis on 11 April 1946 at the

ages of 18 and 17. Nuvolari died of a stroke on 11 August 1953 at the age of 61 and the funeral procession wound its way from the house through the city to Sant'Andrea. When his widow died in 1981, the house was left to the Daughters of Saint Paul, who opened an Edizioni Paoline bookshop in the adjoining building (number 1A) on 14 October. The study with Nuvolari's trophies on the ground floor of the house has been converted into a private chapel.

*Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 10;  
Valeria Dalcore, “Le suore nella casa di Tazio Nuvolari,” in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 11 May 2007; Mazzotti 2012, p. 22; pp. 26–27; p. 33.





## Palazzo INPS

1935–1939

Mario Loreti

Piazza Martiri di Belfiore 1–3, Via Filippo Corridoni 1,  
Lungorio IV Novembre

The building occupies three sides of the western portion of a large block on the edge of the old city centre overlooking Piazza Martiri di Belfiore, designated in the urban planning scheme of 1921–1927, drawn up by the engineer Aldo Badalotti, as the new showcase centre of the Fascist city.

It was designed in 1935 and built in the period 1936–1939 for the INFPS (national department of social security) by the Roman architect Mario Loreti, the author of public buildings in Varese over the same period, who took the international avant-garde of modern architecture and the overall brick facings of Fahrenkamp and Mendelsohn as his points of reference.

The three façades of the trapezoidal edifice follow the aesthetic canon of the Fascist public buildings of the period as dictated by the policy of economic self-sufficiency. The ground floor has a massive and slightly tilted facing of light-coloured travertine stone that includes the first-floor window sill and extends in depth on the side facing the Rio canal. The first and second instead present regular courses of exposed brick reaching up to a stringcourse of travertine, above which the top floor has projecting courses. While there is no break in continuity at the corner on Via Corridoni, the rounded corner of the entrance looking onto the piazza in front of the Palazzo dell'Agricoltura presents a recess divided into three sections by columns of light-coloured travertine without capitals with

an elevated portico and a loggia above.

The four-storey building has offices for the public on the mezzanine and the administrative offices and director's office on the first floor. The entrance on Via Corridoni, close to the adjacent building, provides access to about ten luxury apartments on the second and third floors. Semi-cylindrical stairwells on the corners of the inner courtyard serve the different floors.

The building housed the INPS offices until the 1960s, when they moved to Viale Fiume, and the forensic medicine centre until 2012. It is currently to let.

Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 78; figs. 23–24 p. 76; Alessandro Mazza, "Misura, cornice, torsione. La modernità di Mario Loreti," in Docci, Turco 2010, pp. 400–413; "Piazza Martiri, l'Inps affitterà la vecchia sede," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 11 May 2010.



**Fascist youth centre named after Filippo Corridoni, now a barracks of the financial police force**

1938  
unknown

Corso Giuseppe Garibaldi 44

Located on what is now Corso Garibaldi, the Opera Nazionale Fascista centre named after Filippo Corridoni is more modest in size and characteristics than the two others in Piazza Virgiliana and the area of Porta Pradella. In this case, the tower is placed in the centre of the façade, slightly projecting and fluted at the sides, with a rectangular entrance set in a base of smooth travertine below a semicircular balcony and a flagpole at the top. The facing develops a chromatic contrast between white stone and brick: travertine with horizontal grooves up to the sills of the first-floor windows and then regular courses of exposed brick, differing in colour, for the two upper storeys. The ground-floor windows, three on either side, are set in frames in expanses of smooth stone. Those of the upper floors are emphasized by frames of white stone, slightly broader on the first and narrower on the second. The drawings in the municipal archives show only two storeys rather than the actual three, thus giving the tower greater prominence on the façade. The differing intervals of the windows in the façade to the left and right of the tower and the way the building fits in with the others along the street suggest the adaptation of an existing edifice with a new façade to represent its public function. Occupied by the Turchetti Brigade during the Italian Social Republic, the building became state property in 1946 and now houses a barracks of the Guardia di Finanza named after Luigi Boccaletti.





**Fascist youth centre named after Michele Bianchi, now Mantova Multicentre**

1939–1941  
Girolamo Bonatti; Ferdinando Cazzaniga

Largo di Porta Pradella 1,  
Via Mutilati e Caduti del Lavoro

A competition held to build a Fascist youth centre in an area undergoing demolition near the city gate of Porta Pradella in 1934 was won by two local professionals, the engineer Bonatti and the architect Cazzaniga. Simple in form but endowed with marked physicality, the building displays higher quality in the standard elements of this type of work despite the limitations imposed by the national policy of economic self-sufficiency. The exterior presents a tower of solid brick pierced by small windows and two perpendicular wings, the one on the street rhetorically interrupted by the opening of the entrance with a full-height portico divided into three bays by giant-order pillars. The façades display alternating horizontal bands of projecting brick and travertine in slabs above a low socle of light-coloured Veronese marble. The windows and the balcony set into the horizontal two-storey layout are outlined with thin slabs of marble. The inscription on the cornice states that this was the centre of the Michele Bianchi group, built in the 17th year of the Fascist Era and the 4th year of the Italian Empire. Completed in 1940, it was inaugurated on 29 July 1941, when Benito Mussolini returned to Mantua after an absence of sixteen years. Confiscated in 1945 together with the other assets of the fallen Fascist regime, the building became state property, used by partisan associations and housing the Cormorano dance hall. Bought by the chamber

of commerce in 1972, it was renovated to serve as new premises to a design by the architect Alfonso Galdi, who preserved the exterior while radically transforming the interiors. Remains of the ancient city walls discovered during the work over the period 1996–1999 were left exposed in two rooms of the central archives in the basement. The building has been part of the MaMu Mantova Multicentre since 2003.

Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 79; figs. 28–29–30 p. 77; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 15; Renzo Dall'Ara, "Quando il Michele Bianchi era un simbolo del Fascismo," in *Gazzetta di Mantova*, 12 ottobre 2003.



## Fascist youth centre named after Arnaldo Mussolini, subsequently a trade-union centre

1939–1941

Attalo Poldi; Angelo Azzi; Ottorino Pavesi; Pietro Ploner

Piazza Virgiliana 53

One of the three Opera Nazionale Fascista centres in the city, the building was erected on a garden owned by the Bustaffa family on the east side of Piazza Virgiliana by a group of local professionals comprising the architect Attalo Poldi, who designed the main façade, and the engineers Azzi, Pavesi and Ploner. The structure presents sections of differing height. A tower with four windows on each of its five storeys on the north side at an angle to the piazza protects the entrance, which is reached by a flight of steps. A two-storey section parallel to the street housed the administrative and political offices, with the rooms for recreation and sport set further back before the final element of the large, semicircular theatre and gymnasium. A good example of Fascist architecture during the drive for economic self-sufficiency, the centre displays the rhetorical characteristics of this type of construction. The formal complexity of the composition cannot unfortunately be seen from the piazza, due to the limited width of the site with respect to its great depth, and the stylized, anti-decorative thrust is developed solely through the contrast of colour and light and shadow between the two materials canonically adopted, namely brick and white stone, travertine in this case. The latter completely covers the lower part of the section on the street up to the slightly projecting sills of the windows on the upper floor, the central one of which presents a shallow balcony with a carved eagle. The upper section and the entire

tower have a facing of exposed brick, as do the parts to the rear. Completed in 1940 and inaugurated by Benito Mussolini on 29 July 1941, the building subsequently housed a trade union centre and the Olimpia dance hall. Currently in a state of abandonment, it has been placed on the market.

*La Voce di Mantova*, 27 October 1940; Gabutti, Bonora 2002, p. 79; fig. 27 p. 77; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 16.





## Building of the Banca Commerciale Italiana, now building for shops and offices

1949–1952  
Aldo Andreani

Via Roma 8–10–12, Vicolo S. Carlo,  
Via Cesare Battisti 11–13

One of Aldo Andreani's most mature works, this was developed in two successive versions during a period of frequent projects for banks, combining experiences and stimuli from the different phases of his architectural eclecticism, in this case, the rigorous, simplified style of the second half of the 20th century together with touches of rationalism and classicism.

While the building occupies only a short stretch on Via Roma and is therefore designed to be seen at an angle, the need was in any case felt for an imposing façade. As a result, it consists unusually of two sections parallel to the street: one taller and set back with a plaster facing and regular array of windows; the other the same height as the neighbouring buildings on the street and designed to project the overall image. The façade is characterized by a marble portal with five entrances, corresponding to the main room of the bank. The surface of the façade, with slabs of smooth stone and horizontal inserts of split stone creating a chiaroscuro effect beneath a narrow denticulated cornice, and the large rectangular frames of the windows, with broader bands at the top and a recessed outline, contribute to the oblique view of the building.

A recessed space on the left side is spanned by a large suspended beam that continues the line of the frontage as far as the two-storey corner section. The construction, which continues towards the courtyard with terraces

and balconies, reorganized more than half of the block on Via Roma and also affected part of the Senoner hotel on the corner of Via Cesare Battisti.

No longer occupied by the bank, the building has preserved its architectural quality in its new role as commercial premises opposite the town hall.

*Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* 1988, p. 160; figs. 7–10 pp. 165–167; pp. 216–217; Dulio, Lupano 2015a, no. 27; RD (Roberto Dulio), "Sede della Banca Commerciale Italiana; Riforma dell'Albergo Senoner," in Dulio, Lupano 2015b, p. 231; p. 32.



## INCIS public housing complex

1951–1952

Mario Paniconi; Giulio Pediconi

Piazza Carlo D'Arco 5–6, Piazza San Giovanni,  
Via Giuseppe Finzi 14, Via XXV Aprile

The public housing complex for state employees, built by the OPRES firm for the Istituto Nazionale Case Impiegati dello Stato (INCIS), comprises four blocks, the largest running along Piazza San Giovanni and the other three perpendicular to it and differing in length in relation to the trapezoidal shape of the block. The moderate height of the four-storey buildings and the pitched roofs were designed to blend in with the surrounding nineteenth-century fabric.

The east building is characterized by projecting loggias on the three upper levels. The others have loggias facing south. The shortest, located on Piazza D'Arco with shops and businesses on the ground floor, mediates the impact of the façade with a recess corresponding to the access road and the side of the building to the east. Each staircase serves two apartments of 4–5 rooms plus facilities per floor. The base on the ground floor is of bush-hammered pink Verona stone. The plaster facing of the upper storeys is very light brown in colour darkened with umber in the recesses of the loggias. The wooden window frames have navy blue rolling blinds. The iron railings are light colour with wire mesh for climbing plants. Rising above the pitched roof, which contains laundry and drying facilities, are tall towers with the profile typical of the Po Valley.

The complex was designed by the Roman architects Mario Paniconi (1904–1973) and Giulio Pediconi (1906–1999) in the period

when they were heavily involved with the INA-Casa housing project.

In the coverage given to the complex in the magazine *Prospettive*, significantly preceded by an image of Francesco di Giorgio's ideal city, the architects draw attention to the “modern, up-to-date” adaptation to the context, characterized by the Palazzo D'Arco, with the adoption of proportional rectangles used in Mantua by the architects of the past.

The central building of the complex and the design of the external spaces were not executed. The block is completed by a small, isolated building.

Mario Paniconi, Giulio Pediconi, “Case a Mantova. Architettura di Mario Paniconi e Giulio Pediconi,” in *Prospettive. Rassegna di Architettura Arredamento Decorazione Scenografia*, no. 2, March 1952, pp. 9–13; Enzo Minchilli, “L'edilizia sovvenzionata,” in *La Casa. Quaderni di architettura e di critica*, no. 6, 1959, *L'architettura moderna in Italia*, p. 429; Alessandra Muntoni, *Lo studio Paniconi e Pediconi 1930–1984*, Università di Roma “La Sapienza”, Edizioni Kappa, Roma 1987, p. 43; note 15 p. 57; p. 188 fig.





## Fruit and vegetable market

1952–1965

Mario De Togni

Località Gambarara, Strada Mantovanella 41, SS 236

Originally designed as a fertilizer factory by the engineer Mario De Togni in 1952, the complex occupies a trapezoidal site delimited by the Mincio deviation canal to the north, the Mantua-Verona railway line to the east and the Strada Mantovanella to the west. Completed in 1965, it was converted by its owners, the Ital Pioggia company, into a depot for the storage and delivery of fruit and vegetables.

The most emblematic of the buildings is the shed of 1,500 square metres with a hyperbolic profile 15 metres in height. Large prefabricated arches of reinforced concrete guide the course of an outer shell made of panels of brick and fibre cement. Horizontal skylights running on both sides and the entire length of the shed at a height of 10 metres and then on the ridge cut and raise the shell externally. The image is that one of a gigantic hangar with elegant wing-like canopies on the sides, enclosed on front and back by large sheets of glass in frames of concrete and iron that flood a completely empty interior with natural light.

The other elements of the complex are a smaller shed, a tall silo with a pitched roof, connected to the shed by a transmission structure, and a small, horizontal, two-storey building at the entrance.

After ceasing to function as a fruit and vegetable market, the complex served as a preliminary centre for immigrants, an Islamic cultural centre and finally a civil protection material and equipment depot (Protezione

Civile Volontari Interforze Onlus). After a long period of reports and disputes beginning in the late 1990s, approximately 2,500 square metres of fibre-cement panels containing asbestos were finally removed in August 2015. The entire area is currently disused and the shed, classified as a protected building forming part of the heritage of industrial architecture, is now in an advanced state of deterioration, having been left exposed to the elements.



## INA Casa Housing in the Te Brunetti District

1953–1955

Luigi Vagnetti

Te Brunetti district, Via Gian Battista Visi 36–42,  
Piazza Renato Giusti 3–14; 18–19, Via Federico Amadei



The area south of the railway line for Legnago, which constituted the new urban boundary for a number of years, underwent private building that the general planning scheme of 1926 for the outskirts was designed to organize into an orthogonal layout crossed diagonally by two main roads leading to a central piazza and the new harbour on the river. In 1934 initial urbanization of the Te Brunetti district saw the construction of 41 single-storey public housing units with from one to four apartments for homeless and large families. Families evicted in connection with the clearance and renovation of the old town centre in the early 1940s were also moved there and the minimal units were gradually replaced with housing blocks of 3–4 storeys and low-density construction of one-family houses.

Laid out along the two parallel axes of the minimal housing, the district was in need of redevelopment by the end of the war to remedy defects in terms of sanitation, social facilities and capacity. Two INA Casa public housing projects were planned by the architect Luigi Vagnetti in 1953 and built in 1954 and 1955. Both were improved versions of a scheme presented the same year as a tender for an INA Casa project in the Palazzo dei Diavoli area of Florence. The first complex, laid out along Via Visi with a brick facing on the bottom storey, is characterized by the independence – also in structural terms – of the eight component blocks, as emphasized through the materials and details involved in

the vertical composition of the façades. The four staggered blocks of the second, running along Via Amadei, present a brick facing on the bottom storey and at both ends. These buildings of high architectural quality have a structure of reinforced concrete and facings of plaster with pitched roofs of brick and wooden door and window frames.

The internal space of Piazza Giusti is a designated public green area and constitutes a traffic-free place for families.

Giancarlo Cataldi, Michela Rossi (eds.), *Luigi Vagnetti Architetto (Roma, 1915–1980). Disegni-progetti-opere*, Alinea Editrice, Firenze 2000, p. 64 no. 56; Francesco Caprini, "Appunti sulle origini e lo sviluppo della città di Mantova e del territorio circostante. L'esplosione del XX secolo," in Bersani, Bogoni 2007, pp. 31–47.





## Provincial Headquarters of the Fire Department

1954–1955

Maria Cittadini; Giacomo Elifani;  
Igino Chellini (structures)

Viale Risorgimento 16, Via Adige 1, Viale Isonzo

The horizontal, flat-roofed complex occupies an entire block and consists of buildings whose architecture and openings indicate the different functions they perform. Laid out on the perimeter, they delimit two courtyards divided by the taller fire-engine garages, which run across the block with a serrated profile due to the orientation of the access points. The larger courtyard is dominated to the west by the drill tower with an expressive exposed structure of reinforced concrete constituting a recognizable landmark in this part of the city. The common spaces, the offices and the entrance on Viale Risorgimento give onto the courtyard. The smaller courtyard to the east is used for maintenance and repair. The external image is projected by the use of the white split stone for facing at the bottom level and white plaster for those above. The window frames and parapets are metal.

The Roman architect Maria Cittadini was the leader of the group that won the national competition for the barracks of the 48th Corps of Fire fighters in 1954, obtaining the commission for the working plans and supervision of works. The group comprised the architect Giacomo Elifani and the engineer Igino Chellini, a professional associate of Cittadini until 1970. During this period Cittadini also won the competition for the Ancona fire brigade barracks in 1956 and worked from 1951 to 1958 for the Imperial War Grave Commission, planning and building fifty-two British cemeteries in Italy with the architects

De Soisson and William Ferguson Stewart. She was also employed by the Swedish RESO company to design two holiday villages, Riva del Sole in Castiglione della Pescaia (1958) and La Serra in Baia Domizia (1966), for the Scandinavian trade-union organizations.



Filling Station

1958; 2009  
Gualtiero Galmanini;  
Studio di architettura Pavesi

Piazzale Antonio Gramsci 17; 9 A-B-C

After the presentation of more transparent solutions in April 1954 and September 1955, architect Gualtiero Galmanini (1909–1976), author of the main staircase of the Milan Triennial, was commissioned on 1 August 1958 to build the existing version: a small linear building characterized by lightness, transparency and the integration of internal and external spaces. This became the visual point of reference from every direction in Piazzale Valletta Paiolo, the fulcrum of the urban expansion envisaged by the planning schemes of 1934 and 1939. The unifying element is the narrow, horizontal canopy on supports of reinforced concrete that rises and tapers towards the east end, where the carwash is located, with full-height glass panels in an iron frame. An open portico, the glazed shop containing the office and restroom, the oil storage space between two slits cut in the canopy and finally the mechanical workshop open to the west are all aligned with more opaque walls of exposed brick in different bonds. The Fulgor-CIF Petroli company obtained permission in 1963 to increase the number of pumps and to redesign Piazzale Gramsci with a roundabout and larger road width. A proposal was put forward in 1969 for a luminous sign, of which there is no trace. Work was carried out as from 1974 to remedy damage to metal elements caused by damp. The facility served as a Total filling station until 2000, followed by a period of reclamation

and abandonment. It was renovated and expanded in 2009 to plans by the Pavesi firm of architects (Alessandro Pavesi, Michelangelo Pavesi, Mirko Veronesi and Valeria Viapiana). The addition of an octagonal volume to the west generated a circular extension of steel and exposed brick with projecting canopies that houses a chemist's shop and involved the design of the square. The former filling station is now a veterinary surgery.

*Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 19; Violetta Bonoldi, Maria Conte, *Conservare la modernità: ipotesi di un restauro a Mantova. Ex stazione di rifornimento carburante Piazzale Gramsci, 17*, degree thesis, Politecnico di Milano, Facoltà di Architettura e Società, supervisor Alberto Grimoldi, a.y. 2004–2005.





## Building of the Società Canottieri Mincio

1960

Mario Pavesi

Via S. Maria Nuova 15, Cittadella



Founded in 1883 by private individuals with premises north of the railway station, the Mincio rowing club owes its motto *perseverando arrivi* (arrival through perseverance) to Gabriele D'Annunzio after its victory in the water sports competition in Salò in 1928. Active in the disciplines of swimming, diving, sailing, rowing and canoeing, the club has won national and international awards over the years with over fifty national athletes and the organization of competitions. It received a Gold Star from the CONI (Italian National Olympic Committee) in 1975 and a Gold Collar in 2015.

After World War II the club moved to new premises in an area of about 15 hectares at Cittadella on the north side of the Lago Superiore designed by the engineer Mario Pavesi. The area forms part of the Porto fort complex built by the Gonzaga dynasty to defend the Mulini bridge. Renovated in 1717 by the Austrian emperor Charles VI with material from numerous small buildings scattered over the countryside, the fort was finally demolished in the 20th century due to the pressure of urban expansion. The western bastion of Santa Marta can still be seen in the area as well as the unfinished municipal public baths. The design incorporates the new premises into these existing structures with great attention to the natural setting. The building is a white, horizontal, L-shaped block. Standing on piers and projecting with a deep horizontal loggia, it continues the line

of the bastion along the lakeside and turns east along the edge of the dock with inserts of brick in different bonds and sunshades. The staircase to the changing rooms on the upper floor is located on the corner around a brick pillar in the double height of the portico. The subsequent installation of glazing to close off some parts has reduced the relationship with the surroundings initially sought through horizontal continuity of the spaces and the reflection of the image on the water of the swimming pools and the lake.



Burgo Paper Mill

1960–1963  
Pier Luigi Nervi

Via Poggio Reale 9

In 1960 the Piedmontese company Cartiere Burgo S.p.A. decided to buy the old Cartiera di Cittadella and turn it into a new plant for the production of newspaper. The new factory had to be designed with a space of 160 metres free of supports in order to house a continuous papermaking machine of exceptional size and performance built by Beloit Italia. The engineer Pier Luigi Nervi met this requirement by designing the roof like the deck of a suspension bridge. Two symmetrical supports of reinforced concrete, 47 metres in height with a lambda-shaped profile to cope with the distribution of loads, were cast in disposable formwork that left its imprint on the finished surface. Positioned 164 metres apart, they support 12 chains of polygonal cross-section connected to 84 steel cables from which the roof, an orthogonal and diagonal mesh of steel lattice beams, is suspended. The machine shop, independent of the suspended roof, is a large box of frosted glass (250 × 30 metres) on a frame of vertical uprights 13.5 metres in height resting on a base of reinforced concrete 7 metres tall with a brick facing, which contains the accessories for the machine on top. The Nervi & Bartoli firm was responsible for the reinforced concrete structures while those in steel were designed by the engineer Gino Covre and produced by the Antonio Badoni firm in Lecco. The external constructions required for production included a new paper warehouse

designed by Nervi with a thin isostatic ribbed floor and two wastewater settling tanks modelled on monumental fountains. Halfway between engineering infrastructure and architecture, the factory constitutes a landmark at the northern entrance to the city. The plant closed on 9 February 2013, leaving the two hundred employees jobless, but a process of building renovation and production conversion began under the new owners, Cartiere di Villa Lagarina, in 2015.

Poretti 1997–1998, pp. 96–107; *Modernità dell'architettura* 2003, no. 24; De Nardi 2011, pp. 118–147; Bologna, Chiorino 2012, pp. 55–63.







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